

AN
HONORABLE
YOUTH

JOHN COLEMAN ADAMS

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An Honorable Youth

BY

JOHN COLEMAN ADAMS

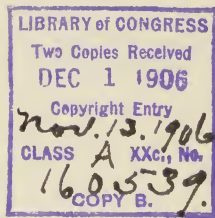


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“The thoughts of youth are
long, long thoughts.”

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AN
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YOUTH



AN HONORABLE YOUTH

A BADGE OF HONOR

WHEN a man has grown gray in righteousness and service to his fellows, they recognize his achievement and congratulate him on his honorable old age ; and earnest and ambitious youth are often urged to action and to sacrifice in their present years, in order that they may earn this guerdon of a good life, and retire on their reputations when they shall have attained that respected estate. But I have never been able to see why one ought not to strive as earnestly for an honorable youth as for an honorable old age. I suspect that there is a wrong theory of life under this style of exhortation. At all events, it needs to be coupled with some such injunction as that of

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Paul, "Let no man despise thy youth." The proverb runs, "A hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." So are the fair bright locks of youth. So are its beauty, its vigor, and its freshness. Everything that can be said of the honor which redounds to age which is godly, can be said as emphatically of youth under the same conditions.



UNDervaluing YOUTH

So the old appeal comes afresh to young men and women not to despise, to undervalue, or to neglect their youth, nor to let anybody else do so. Let no man or woman, least of all yourself, despise your youth. Let us be clear as to what we mean by this phrase. You "despise your youth" when you make its years and its labors seem unimportant or trivial; your youth is just as dignified and honorable a time as any other period

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in all your life. You despise it when you treat it as a time for play, the recreation period, irresponsible, careless, and free of duty; your youth calls for work and holds you to duty, after its own fashion, as sternly as any later years. You despise your youth when you give it over to vices, to sins of folly or passion, under the false notion that you can put them all away later on, and settle down to a career of rectitude and peace; the sins of youth have a way of lasting and of troubling a lifetime. You despise your youth when you banish from it all sweet and inspiring thoughts of God and His kingdom, and spend those fresh and glorious years without ever feeling that your life is God's business and that God's business is your life.

Whatever lessens the sense, in your mind, of the dignity, the importance, the influence of your present years, is in the deepest and the most vital sense a contempt for your youth. Try to get such a view and outlook into your real life as will reveal

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to you the immense honor which you may win for these years you are passing through. For remember, the only way you can prevent other men and women from despising your youth is by not despising it yourself.



BEGINNING ON THE HEIGHTS

Do not, then, despise your youth by adopting a low ideal. Begin your life on the heights. No man sees the best of life, no man realizes all there is of its joy and glory, who begins by looking at it through the fogs and shadows of a low conception of duty and of character. You cheat yourself of some of the choicest experiences of life, you rob it especially of the glory of strength and power, if you begin your career with base affections and with commonplace aims. Low ideals make low actions. The soul that takes to the mire of the swamps and sewers of

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life besmirches its own nature. You are entitled to a radiant vision, to an exultant joy, as you go forth to meet the years. You cannot have your birthright if you plunge into the clouds and gloom of youthful sins and excesses.



THE FALLACY OF THE "WILD OATS" THEORY

Do not, therefore, accept the abominable doctrine, born of ignorance and black-heartedness, that the quickest way to a manhood of tranquillity is through a youth of riot. You might as well say that the quickest cut to a maturity of strength was through a youth of disease. That is a worn-out doctrine, physically and mentally. We no longer put up with the lazy and imbecile theory that our children must all have a certain round of diseases — mumps, measles, scarlet fever, small-pox — in order to be

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free from them later on. We are taking hold of these scourges of physical life and stamping them out. We are saying that our children need not suffer from them at all, and shall not if care and quarantine can prevent. That is the only true theory of moral life as well. We will no more grant that it is necessary to sap a young life of its strength by evil courses—falsehood, recklessness, drunkenness, licentiousness—than that it is necessary to rob a young body of its energies by loathsome diseases. The “wild oats” theory of youth, the idea that it is best to have one’s fling and sober down, rests on two perilous falsehoods. One is that you can have your “fling” without throwing away something invaluable and irrecoverable. The other is that you can “sober down” without having any serious loss to be really sober about. Something is gone from life which you can never quite regain here, when you gamble your youth for the low pleasures of sense and malice.

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Happily, under Christian teaching, we have half-mastered that truth. Nobody for an instant will claim that a girl will make a better woman because she has been wayward, frivolous, or sinful in her youth! God forbid, we say, when such a proposition is urged. It is blasphemy against woman's nature. But it is no truer of a young man than of a young woman. One law for youth and maiden! That is the gospel! "For in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female."



SOME LAX MAXIMS

If you will believe this teaching, you will see the error and the folly of that theory so common in our schools and colleges that it is eccentric and priggish to have and to hold a high ideal of scholarship and of conduct. To begin your lives with the conviction that nobody ought

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to aim higher than the commonplace and the average, is to rank yourselves, as far as to-day goes, among the dull, the unfaithful, and the transgressors. That is their rule of life. "I am as good as the rest," they all say. "They all do it." What does that mean? It is what the boodler says to justify his political thefts from the people. It is what the gambler says, pointing to the business man who speculates in cotton and in copper. It is what the merchants say, who would justify short weight and shoddy goods. The pupil who cheats at his studies, and who is content with a low mark and an indifferent deportment, and uses this excuse, is ranking himself in his world where these people stand in the life of the business and political world. He sets himself down among the misde-meanants and the downright criminals. I am anxious and troubled when I hear a youth use these phrases of the lower ranks, the maxims of the slothful and the lax. You dishonor and

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despise your own youth when you consent to that theory of school life or college life. You begin your life by degrading your life. You are robbing yourself of the greatest motive power of a high success — an exalted ideal.



THE GREAT NOW

Once more; do not dishonor your youth by thinking of it as nothing but a time of sowing, of output, of effort, which brings with it no reaping, no ingathering, no results. It is a false and dishonoring view of life which teaches that all the returns are postponed till another world; that there is no heaven here on earth, but that you must wait for that till the life to come. The new theology has destroyed that doctrine beyond all chance of resurrection, and we are believers in the power of the present life to return present joy, in a

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present heaven, in the joy of the here and the now. Let the youth apply that same thought to the years of his young manhood. Let him think of his life as a season in which he gets all that he gives, which yields returns on his investment of strength, of sacrifice, of industry, as fast as he makes it. Do not think that you are to postpone the hope of reaping the good of a youth of rectitude and love till your body is bent and your vigor is gone. That is quite to miss life's real meaning. The object of a Christian life is not to get something at its end; it is to provide for a safe and pleasant journey. It is not the laying up of treasures for the future; it is having it to spend all the time. Nobody works through the day in order to get a good night's rest afterward; but we work for the joy of labor, and the reward of living. The youth and maiden are in as immediate relations to God and to the world as they will ever be. Duty has begun;

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the commandments are in force; penalty and reward are in operation for the young as for the old. The great Now is yours, and you are in a real world, whose responsibilities and whose privileges call and invite you every day. Honor your youth by realizing this about it, that it is a real time, a time of reward and of realization and of actual relation to God. It is true that you are living for a future. But the only way you will do anything worthy for that future is by what you do for to-day. And meanwhile to-day has its claims and its duties and its commands that belong wholly to itself.



A LIFE THAT ENDS WITH YOUTH

If you live with this thought as a guiding one, you will have a solution to that mystery which so many find a hard one to solve, when

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you see one of your companions cut down in his youth, or when, perhaps, you yourself stand face to face with the solemn fact that for you there is to be no old age, no slow maturity and long years of preparation to go hence. Many a boy, many a girl, has had to confront that sobering reality. Then if you have dishonored your youth by putting away from it all seriousness, earnest work, loving worship and service, you will realize how you have been cheating yourself and that somehow there has been an awful mistake in your ideals and in your work. But if you have made good use of your time, and honored your present, you shall feel the sweet assurance that if you have no more years on earth ahead of you, you have made good use of those behind you.

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A FINE SAYING

Not long ago there was laid on my table a memorial card, in loving remembrance of Francis Wayland, and of his work for the Connecticut Prison Association, by his associate in the noble work, John C. Taylor. That card closes with these fine words: "No more wise counselor or charming companion than Francis Wayland ever comes into the life of any man, and his absence makes familiar scenes seem strange and unnatural. Without having a doubt of the existence of a heavenly home, let me say:

" 'If there is another world he lives in bliss,
If there is not, he made the most of this.' "

That is a fine saying by which to interpret your youth to yourselves. An honorable youth permits him who possesses it to say: "If there be more years, this helps to make them sure of honor. If these be all, they themselves have been honorable."

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A YOUTH OF NAZARETH

There was once a youth of Nazareth, who fulfilled all these high conditions which are the marks of an honorable youth. From His earliest days he was found in His Father's house. He lived in His present, and though His years were few, He immortalized them by the one immaculate career of this earth. He lived and He wrought on the heights of life. For Him there was no descent and degeneracy, no sinning and repenting, no waste and no regret. And He set forever the standard of a true youth, honorable, devout, consecrated. He calls young men and women to follow Him in that ideal youth which walks with God, which has begun the service of man, and which honors itself.

THE
THOUGHTFUL
LIFE



THE THOUGHTFUL LIFE

THE PLEA FOR EDUCATION

ONE of the real marks of our land and generation is the zealous interest everywhere shown in education. The school, the college, and the university, fill a vast place in the public thought. And this trait of Americans, rightly read, is an impressive sign of the increasing sense of the value and the power of the thoughtful life. It shows the American sense of the importance of study, of taking heed for the life, of intelligence, foresight, outlook. It is a mighty plea for culture, for sound learning, for the increasing empire of pure thought. The one great need of our time, the necessity and the pleading cry of our generation, is for this thoughtful life in business, in politics, in social organization, in religion.

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THE ZEAL FOR DOING

I know that this declaration does not jump with the times. We are all familiar with the superficial demand for just what America has always had in abundance; for aggressiveness, for push and for pull; for facility in doing things and producing effects; for all that goes in the train of courage, dash, self-confidence, and a restless, insatiable zeal to be doing. It may savor of temerity to question whether the "strenuous life" is the thing we are most in need of. But surely America has always held in especial honor the men and women who achieve, who do, who succeed, who produce effects. Only a nation full to overflowing of the "strenuous life" could have subdued a continent, built a wholly new political structure, set the pace for the world in commerce, manufacture, and political institutions, in a little more than two centuries. No soft and indolent being could have produced such results. If there

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is any quality more than another which marks the American character, always has marked it, and always will mark it, it **is** strenuousness. The American is the incarnation of the initiative, of the affirmative sentence, and the active voice. This outcry for strenuousness is not, therefore, the voice of a new impulse, just born in our national life. It is the reminiscence of a more boisterous day in our development — what Prof. Goldwin Smith calls a “vehemence of character still breathing of frontier life.”



THE SAVING GRACE OF THOUGHTFULNESS

But precisely because we have always been such a strenuous folk, do we need the compensating and the saving grace of thoughtfulness.

It is a magnificent thing to see a youth or a people start out for a goal and bend themselves to some great end and purpose. But always

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before that start can be made, the purpose has to be thought out and the way laid in the mind. Behind the valiant deed there lies the mighty passion. Under the passion burns the thought which begets it. "Intellect," says Emerson, "is the simple power anterior to all action." Before we act let us know what we are trying to do, why we are trying to do it, and whether it is worth doing at all. Doing, after all, is not the most important thing in the world.



THE FUTILITY OF LIFE ALL ACTION

It is pathetic, when it is not exasperating, to hear the changes rung on the duty of a man to do, even if he misdo ; to bring forth a result, even if it be a blunder ; to go somewhere, even if it be to perdition ; to get something, even though it be his quietus. There is a deep and dangerous fallacy in all this, which only a glance at the

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most plain and practical matters in your lives ought to expose. It is well to hit hard, when you are not hitting a stone wall or a mountain, in which case you are only smashing your own fist. It may show grit to charge the center of the line ; but every football player knows that the winner is often the man who goes around the end. The crowd in the grand stand roars at the cracking strike which the nimble fielder captures ; but time and again the game is won by the teasing "bunt." It is very brilliant and daring to carry on sail and defy the squall. But when the skipper is clearing away the wreckage of broken spars, or floundering in the water, he wishes he had reefed.

By all means do something in life, provided you do it intelligently. Go somewhere, provided you know whither you are bound. But remember that to achieve with understanding is the only wise strenuousness. Life which is all action is blind, superficial, futile, stupid. Ten thousand horse-

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power down in the hold of the steamer is a magnificent thing only so long as there is a compass on the bridge. Break that compass, and those engines are nothing but a menace and a peril. The locomotive on the limited express is a triumph of mechanical art only as long as it is held by the rails laid by the guiding thought of the civil engineer. The forces that drive must be supplemented by the passive needle, by the compelling grip of the tenacious rails ; otherwise they become energies that shatter, wreck, and destroy.

In proportion, then, as American life is characterized by energy and by aggressiveness, it ought to be protected, guided, controlled by insight and training. My contention is that the need of our national life is not more steam, but better steering. It is not more energy, but more light — not strenuousness, but sagacity.

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DEMOCRACIES MUST THINK OR FAIL

The primary reason for this need lies always in the fact that as we live in a democratic republic, and in a state where the people are the rulers, their rule will be misrule unless they be trained to think. A subject may perhaps dispense with light and reason; a sovereign citizen never can. It requires little intelligence to submit and to obey; to rule, to use the ballot, to vote in the referendum, are responsibilities which cannot be sustained without thoughtfulness as well as nominal education. If there is any proposition which is absolutely certain, in the way of social prophecy, it is that brains are to rule. If, therefore, the free citizen wishes to participate in the actual government of his country, he must learn to think, he must have a mind of his own, and must know how to use it. Otherwise he will fall into the hands of those who have learned to do what he has not. An ignorant democracy

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becomes an oligarchy. The multitude is a mob, and the mob is at the mercy of the bosses, and the bosses are the shrewd, the far-sighted, the crafty. There is no salvation for free institutions save in a thinking people.



DAILY LIFE GROWING INTRICATE

But not only does the fundamental problem of having a republic at all demand a thoughtful people. The incidental problems of all life, common life, daily life, are all the time becoming more complex, and therefore more exacting of the intellect. Our daily affairs grow more difficult, intricate, trying. It takes a clear head and a good deal of thinking to get the world through a day's life in our age. Commerce is vastly more difficult. Manufacture is a science in itself. Politics is an art and a science in one. It calls for far more brain power to sail a

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steamship across the ocean now than it did to navigate the *Mayflower* from Delfthaven to Plymouth. To carry on a business to-day, with all the delicate relations between employers and employed, the speed and rush of production, the exact estimates required, and the nice economies practiced, would drive a merchant of the Middle Ages crazy. Even the modern householder, with his complicated equipment of conveniences,—his heater in the cellar, his range and gas stove in the kitchen, his electric buttons, his gas pipes and water faucets, must have a larger working knowledge of applied science than ever Pliny or Friar Bacon had heard of. The intellectual equipment is becoming an indispensable for the most trivial of affairs, the mere routine of life. The average mind must be bigger and better trained.

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THE SCIENTIFIC HABIT

For the world has learned never to forget or to ignore its knowledge, the scientific habit. That habit is neither more nor less than the thoughtful life made customary. It consists in pondering the meaning of things, and seeking their interpretation. It makes men ask, "How?" "Why?" "What?" of all the facts and happenings of life. It teaches them to look before they leap, and to think before they speak, to be sure they are right before they go ahead, and to be sure they are wrong before they back out. It holds no fact too sacred to be investigated, no tradition too venerable to be asked for its family history. It is the product of the thoughtful life, and it will make life more thoughtful still.

The scientific habit, too, is the beginning of a larger development of facility in performance, of skill, aptitude, the power of applying knowl-

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edge to ends, and intelligence to wise uses — what the old-fashioned folk of New England used to call “faculty.” They had another name for it, too, and a few years ago an alumnus of Amherst College declared at a commencement dinner that he hoped to be rich enough before he died to endow a chair in his alma mater, and, if he ever did, it would be a professorship in “gumption.” It means the power of disposing of what one has learned, and working off one’s knowledge usefully and wisely.



THE FOOLISHNESS OF MERE ACQUISITION

It is easy enough for even a thoughtless mind to acquire, to store up knowledge, to be learned and loaded with facts. But to dispose of the fact at the right moment and the proper place is wholly a question of thought-

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fulness, of the intelligence which stops to think what it is doing. It is related that, on one of the battlefields of the civil war, a rifle was picked up which contained seven charges, one on top of the other. The excited soldier who used the piece had put in one after another without thinking to fire them off. That incident illustrates fully the uselessness and the fatuity of loading the mind with study after study, and fact after fact, which it never has learned how to use and apply. It is part of the thoughtful life to learn how to fire off knowledge, as well as to load it into the brain.



THE THOUGHTFUL LIFE A VIGOROUS LIFE

Now if the American youth be resolved to live the thoughtful life, he will find himself committed to anything but a passive and a negative career. The thoughtful life is not an

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easy life. It is neither the parent nor the child of leisure. It must never be undertaken by idlers or by cowards. The path of the thoughtful man is hard and thorny, a keen test of the endurance of heart and will. We are not to identify the thoughtful life with the old, contemplative life such as fascinated the souls of quiet and retiring men in former ages. There is no necessary connection between thoughtfulness and a convent cell, or an easy chair. He who thinks has need of a vigorous temper, a dauntless spirit. He has something else to do besides seclude himself in personal meditation and tranquil dreams. To think is to bestir one's self; it is to be awake and alert; it is to be up early looking for facts, and to study late into the night, trying to make out the truths they teach. It is to train the mind long and hard in the gymnastics of the reason, and to keep the training up all one's life. It is to enlist the whole nature in

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the effort to know and use the truth. "No one," says Charles Ferguson, "ever thought to any purpose with his head alone."



THE COST OF TRUTH

For it costs something to attain the facts and the truth about the universe. Truth is expensive, a dear commodity. Nothing but righteousness costs as much, and there is nothing for which men are willing to pay any more. To get even the meager knowledge we possess has been the most exacting of undertakings. It is a labor on which human beings have spent strength, time, pangs, tears, life itself. It is an achievement which has called for superhuman sacrifices, divine consecration, a spirit of love like that of the godhead. It is strange that God should have put such a price on what is so necessary to man's good; or rather it would

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be strange if we did not know that this eternal challenge to his strength and courage was simply the demand for his tuition in the great school of power and of life. Every penny of the cost is invested for man's good; but it has to be paid.

We may find a striking illustration of what it has cost to get our ideas into line with the facts, in the one single particular of electricity. To accumulate that little store of knowledge, thousands of men and women have struggled with poverty, wrestled with weakness, lavished strength, freely spent time, vitality, and life itself. They have added to the slender discoveries of Thales the Greek, and Boyle the Englishman, the researches of the Leyden students, of Volta and Galvani and Franklin. They have wrought out the patient ingenuities of Morse and Wheatstone, of Bell and Dolbear, of Edison and Marconi, till the nimble spark has been made to carry messages on a wire, to convey the

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accents of the human voice, to whisper through the great spaces of air. We mount a trolley car, and think it is the dynamo in the power-house which sends us on our way. But if we only thought a little farther we should find that it is the stored-up energy of ten thousand brains which pulls the car along its level tracks. The light from the incandescent wire is the transmuted force of the human mind, the product of the life of thought. Or recall, again, what vigorous and rigorous thinking has been done to perfect the schools in which our youths, if not by a royal highway, at least by a far easier path than of old, travel to large learning. It has cost more toil than we can compute to study and to understand the laws of the unfolding mind and to devise methods for training it aright. Pestalozzi and Froebel, Rousseau and Harriet Martineau, Horace Mann and Herbert Spencer — these are but a few field marshals in that great and innumerable army which for two hundred

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years has been studying the problem of modern education. Who questions the positive forcefulness of this company of effective thinkers!



HONOR FOR THE DREAMERS

Yet do not let me be misunderstood. I am almost afraid that I shall seem to have implied that these busy thinkers have been valuable to the world because they have given it something which can be turned into money; that they are to be judged useful because their thoughts have been set to work. Let me remind you that when they were doing their hardest thinking, they seemed to be as far as possible from anything like a practical use of what they were thinking. They seemed little more than dreamers and enthusiasts. But the society which has no place for such as they, which does not honor the men who are content to be called theorists

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and dreamers while they think out the foundations of new sciences and of institutions and of great policies, never can live. We must learn to pay a larger honor to the men who stand aloof from the crowd and observe and judge. We must learn to have somewhat better than a sneer for the men who do not drive the plow, nor swing the reaper, but prefer to turn aside and study the relations of seed and soil, of moth and flower, of rainfall and forest acreage. Do not grow up with disdain for the men who think things out, even if they do not work them out.



“ACADEMIC” THINKING

Herbert Spencer was as valuable a man to his day as a half-dozen Parliaments and cabinets, lords, commoners, and all. Is there any “captain of industry” worth as much to this country as Ralph Waldo Emerson? You will hear much

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unwholesome contempt to-day for what men call "academic" discussions of great questions — which simply means the discussion of them in the light of principle, and not of policy; but the academic questions of to-day are the practical politics of to-morrow. And he who will not weigh them on their moral merits will never be in at the settlement of them. He will be left utterly out of sight. Your despiser of academic thinking is usually a man who is too lazy or too cowardly to think down to ethical or intellectual hardpan. And because he builds on the sands, his house will stand only till the rains descend and the floods come.



THE CALL FOR COURAGEOUS THINKING

But the thoughtful life calls not only for industry and endurance; it exacts a peculiarly high quality of courage and of strength, because the thinker is bound to face very trying situations.

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He will often find himself obliged to know that the popular creed is a delusion based on a lie. He will sometimes find out that what he himself loved to believe as the truth must be rejected as falsehood. He has to confront great possibilities of sorrow and even of terror; to risk collisions with party, church, the whole social order; to invite discomfort of mind and of heart; to incur the dislike, the suspicion of his fellow-men. The really thoughtful life leads one past the conventional shams to the reality of things. It corrects falsehood and opens up the truth. It forces us to see and to foresee the evil in the world and its consequences, to discern the steady gains of the good, the sure defeat of the bad.

But these things are matters which it is not easy to communicate. It is not good for one's peace of mind to tell all that one knows. The world is not anxious to hear the truth, and gives it only a grudging welcome. So many people have their profitable enterprises built on shams;

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so many are drawing large incomes from lies ; so many have staked their reputation for intelligence on what is without warrant in fact — that there is always great protest and outcry when the thoughtful man blurts out a new truth, or reiterates an old one grown unpopular. That used to be the sign for kindling fires and oiling up the thumbscrews. It is still, sometimes, the signal for throwing stones and rotten eggs. And frequently the only response to a truth frankly spoken is to be called “ heretic ” or even “ traitor.”

But whatever the income or the outcome from his thinking, it is the business of the honest, faithful man to proceed with the work, let come what will. One thing is always certain to come of all honest thinking, of every thoughtful life — that is, light, knowledge, the truth. However society revolts at first against the fruits of thought, it always ends by yielding to the truth at last, a glad, free, devoted allegiance. Your day will come ; and it is the only day which will endure.

COMMERCIALISM,
PRO AND CONTRA



COMMERCIALISM, PRO AND CONTRA

A NEW WORD

WITHIN the last ten years a new term has made its way into the world's vocabulary. It is the word "commercialism." Its advent is, of course, the sign of a new fact in human society, or a new phase of some old fact. Words do not arise by spontaneous generation. There is always a reason for them in the life of men. And this comparatively new word is a significant straw showing which way the winds of human evolution are blowing. Some of the suggestions involved in that word are worth a passing thought.

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COMMERCIALISM AS A SIGN OF PROGRESS

I suspect that there are two different ideas in men's minds as they talk about "commercialism," and they are quite wide apart in their force. They differ, as the use and the abuse of a thing differ. There is one conception of commercialism which regards it as the policy and practice and philosophy of life which have arisen with the growing tendency to peaceful pursuits and the decline of wars. Commercialism, in this sense, means the substitution of commerce for warfare, the prevalence of what Herbert Spencer calls the industrial over the militant type of character. It means the increasing interest of men in peaceful pursuits, the raising of crops, the manufacture of all the commodities which minister to comfort and use, the exchange of those commodities for mutual benefit. Mankind is rapidly transferring its interests from war to peace, from killing to prolonging life, from destruction of wealth to its

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creation and increase. That is the meaning of all which goes to mark this as a commercial age, of the enormous growth of industries, of the growing influence of the tradesman, the merchant, the financier, of the building of ships, the laying of railways, the stringing of telegraph wires and cables, the strife for larger and better markets, for freer and fairer conditions of work. Commercialism, in this sense, is the grand, impressive, eloquent sign of the world's progress. It is the witness to the fact we have arrived one stage nearer the millennium.



COMMERCIALISM AS A PORTENT OF EVIL

But there is another thing which is much talked of under this same name. It is the tendency to place all values, reckon all progress, compute all the gains of life in terms of dollars and goods. It is the greed for gain, grown to

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a passion, absorbing and commanding. It is the disposition to subordinate all politics to the lust of wealth, to make all parties the servants of trade, to buy and sell art, literature, religion itself as mere commodities, to be the prize of the highest bidder. It is the submission of all the higher interests of this life to the behests of the money power—the muzzling of the pulpits, the subsidizing of the press, the control of the university, by the kings of finance, the barons of the stock exchange. That, too, is a sense in which commercialism is talked about to-day. And it is a sign of evil, a portent of degeneration, one of the perils of a dangerous period of history. It is the besetting sin of a time in which industrial civilization is coming into power.

It is time that we began to discriminate in our use of these meanings of this single term. We ought to have clear ideas as to what is the true and what the false commercialism;

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what we ought to pray for, as a preparation for the kingdom of heaven, and what to set our faces against, as a quick and easy way to moral confusion and callousness. For certainly nobody ought to think with any disparagement of commercialism which is viewed as the successor of militarism. The age of trade is a vast distance ahead of the age of war. The merchant is a great gain upon the soldier. When the sword is beaten into a plowshare and the spear into a pruning hook the golden age begins to show in the distance. The kingdom of heaven itself is promoted by the advance of the kingdom of commerce.



HOW TRADE MEANS MUTUAL SERVICE

For think what commerce is. We have given it a bad name and identified it with all its own abuses and come to think of it as a

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game of overreaching, of unfair advantage, of trick and fraud. But it is nothing of the sort. Commerce is one of the fairest and finest transactions our race has ever devised. It is a service rendered, a benefit started on its travels, selfishness transmuted into beneficence. A trade, which is commerce in its simplest term, is a mutual service rendered for mutual benefit. Each party to it is the gainer; yet each serves the other. There is, properly speaking, no best end of a fair bargain. The old time fur-traders of North America went to the Indians with hatchets, or guns, or powder and ball; the savage met the trader with beaver-skins and bear-skins, and all manner of peltry. They exchanged wares. Each got what he wanted more than the thing he gave up. Each was, therefore, benefited by the transaction. Each did the other a service. That is all there is to commerce. That is the philosophy of it in a nutshell. The whole vast machinery of

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trade in modern times is only a variation and expression of the principle of that simple transaction. Now, how can men be better employed than when they are rendering one another mutual service? Is not this stage of society a vast improvement upon that in which these same human beings are slaughtering one another, destroying property, and doing all manner of disservice one to another? Does not the "commercial age" begin to justify itself as at least a forerunner of the age of righteousness and good will which we call "the kingdom of heaven?" Fundamentally, the idea of commerce is entirely consistent with the principles of the Golden Rule, or of the second Great Commandment. And a population in which the aim of the people was fair trade with one another for mutual gain would be very highly qualified for the kingdom of God.

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COMMERCE THE SECULAR ALLY OF CHRISTIANITY

But the effect of commerce is fully equal to the broad and humane principle on which it rests. It is the great secular ally of all that Christianity stands for and begets. Christianity calls for peace among men. Commerce is a great treaty-maker all over the world. Christianity proclaims brotherhood. Commerce promotes the intercourse which fosters the mighty bond. Christianity aims at the well-being of mankind. Commerce spreads comfort, convenience, contentment, as it rolls up its profits. Christianity would uplift men and women in spirit and understanding. Commerce carries enlightenment wherever it goes. Christianity calls on men to serve one another for love's sake. Commerce sets them to mutual service for mutual gain. Christianity stands for righteousness and morality. And wherever the age of

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commerce has succeeded the age of war, and the merchant has replaced the soldier, morals rise higher and the standards of conduct all improve. With all its shortcomings, with all the evils which grow out of the narrowness and bigotry of merchants and the fact that so many of them have only half outgrown the ideals of the military age, the age of commercialism is a distinct and glorious advance in civilization and world progress.



THE MIGHT OF THE MERCHANT

But commerce plays even a larger part than we have yet shown in the advancement of the brotherhood of man and the practice of righteousness. Not only is the commercial nation more civilized and enlightened than the nation which is mainly or merely warlike, it is also a stronger nation. It has vaster resources in the struggle for existence and

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supremacy. In the earlier days, the tribes which had learned to till the soil, to rear flocks and herds, and to exchange products with one another, were able to overcome their warlike but unproductive neighbors. For agriculture, manufacture, commerce, enable a greater population to live in a given area, and make the population stronger, richer, wiser, more influential. That made the survival of the commercial nations the more certain. And they who began by sneering at the peaceful people ended by submitting to them. Napoleon taunted the English with being a nation of shopkeepers. But England's trade made her so strong that she conquered her military rivals on the Continent; and the emperor who gave France her fill of military glory wrecked her prestige, and from his lonely home in St. Helena had a chance to reflect on the superiority of the great people whom he had belittled with that sneer. Holland, in her life and death struggle

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with Spain, taught the world how a little nation mighty in trade may defy a greater one whose power is no stouter than a sword blade. That will always be the way; and the more dependent men become upon one another, as they are constantly becoming by freer trade and interchange of commodities, the very necessities of life, the less will be the need of standing armies and great navies. There is a mightier weapon than the sword, with which the modern nations may be coerced and made reasonable. It is the threat, expressed or understood, of a withdrawal of trade, a holding up of supplies, which means a quick starvation into submission.



THE CORNERSTONE OF SUPREMACY

There are some noisy people in this country who will never be still nor rest easily at night until we have a navy as big and as expensive as that

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of England, or France, or Germany. To them a powerful navy is the only bulwark of the Monroe Doctrine, the only weapon of defense against foreign invasion, the only foundation of our supremacy as a world power. But they might have a good deal more sleep and peace of mind if they would only remember that there are other things to make nations pause before going to war with us. England would have to think of where she was to get her flour and her beef and her petroleum if she cut off her trade with these United States. She would have to think whether she could afford to impoverish one of her very best customers in what she had to sell, and whether she could afford to sacrifice what she would lose on American securities held in England. She would recall with nervousness the terrible day of the sixties, when Lancashire cotton mills shut down and the operatives went hungry because the supply of cotton was cut off by the civil war in the states. This country will always be a hard

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one to go to war with, not simply because its soldiers are brave and its armaments effective, but because, as Carl Shurz once said, it can live so long and so easily on its own fat. No nation will ever go to war again with a great commercial people without first counting the cost of such a rupture. And if it put England out of pocket a billion dollars to conquer a handful of Boer farmers and merchants in South Africa, there will be considerable hesitancy before she or any other great power grapples with a rich and resourceful commercial people.



THE STRENUOUSNESS OF A BUSINESS LIFE

But there is still another way in which the kingdom of commerce tends to become a part of the kingdom of heaven, and the age of trade is, in a double sense, an age of gold. The type of character bred in a land of large commercial spirit is wholesome, noble, and vigorous. It lacks none

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of the rigor and vigor of the soldier's and it adds a list of virtues peculiar to itself. It is common to talk as if the heroic and self-sacrificing virtues all declined with the advent of peace; as if the tradesman were a weakling, and the child of an age of commerce only a money grabber and a poltroon. There never was a more mistaken estimate of ethical values.

The lives of the world's great merchants, of its great explorers, pioneers, organizers, inventors — all of them the coadjutors of commercialism — show as signal courage, strength, endurance, forcefulness as those of the martial heroes. Columbus, on his audacious push westward, was a servant of the commerce of his day; he was out for "business" — a new route to the marts of India. Lewis and Clark, and Daniel Boone, and John C. Fremont, and Oakes Ames, and all the host of pioneers and settlers whose vigorous courage and indomitable pluck gave us our great inland empire were all of them looking up trade. There

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is "strenuousness" enough in the life of a Gloucester fisherman or the captain of an Atlantic liner to satisfy the most fanatical disciple of that type of life. We should find in the daily life of an American man of business, a man of affairs in the largest sense, enough conditions to try the stanchest courage, the most resolute will, the most unflinching industry. If you measure these men, rich men, perhaps, surrounded with comforts and with ease to-day, by the standards of Jesus Christ, you will find it true of them, as He found it true of a certain rich young man of his day ; that they "are not far from the kingdom of heaven."



THE DIGNITY OF COMMERCE

Indeed, they come short of its borders by only a little space. They have been trained in a good school. It only needs the right comprehension of such an age as ours, such a sense of its oppor-

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tunity and its duty, to turn our men and women into active and true disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. If the man of business would only believe in his calling, if he would only realize that he is at the head of the column of the advancing family of mankind; if he would only claim the rights he is entitled to, as the leader and guide of men to a better civilization, we should soon have done with these false ethical values, and appreciate our own day and its characteristics at their true worth. But he is forever thinking of the money he will make and the glory he will get and the power he will win and the time when he can get out of business and do nothing. And so he is forever missing the real nobility of his work, the joy of doing, of making the world richer and happier, of serving his fellow-men in some of their many needs. He is still ready to cheer the warrior and envy him his gilt buttons and glittering weapons, never seeing that he sits in a higher place among the mighty and wields a power which great gen-

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erals never could assert. The man of commerce needs to feel his own dignity in the economy of progress and affairs.



BUSINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Then, too, he ought to feel his own work is part and parcel of the very highest interests of mankind—the interests which express themselves in art and literature and music and morals. There is no need that we should wait till we have all made fortunes, or built up a foreign market, or settled the question of trade unions, before we proceed to consider the matter of education or build monuments or paint pictures or compose symphonies. But what are we thinking of? Do we picture the kingdom of Heaven as an estate in which nobody shall be busy making shoes, and building houses, and supplying food and raiment, but everybody living on his income and busy about nothing

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but being good? A thriftless, shiftless estate that would be indeed! The business of being good can only be carried on by being good at business. We are only about the Father's business when we are diligent in the tasks of our vocations, buying and selling honestly, doing good work without skimping, carrying out contracts to the letter, overcoming obstacles, conquering our fears, and winning our way to the success of righteousness and courage.

The world of commerce is not a separate world from that of ethics and religion. "It has been supposed," says Charles Ferguson, "that we could first settle the bread and butter question, and then proceed to finer issues. But there are no finer issues." All that is divinest and most Christ-like can be wrought, must be wrought out in this world, as we hammer and sew and paint and sing. Literature is the fine expression of the life that is. The best music is the song the souls of men sing as they toil.

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The great cathedrals were the expression of the religion of the men who worked to build them. And the greatest sculpture of all time — was it not done in honor of the divinities of the Egyptian and the Greek? The Master of us all thought out his gospel and prepared his heart for Calvary while he worked at the carpenter's bench, and helped at the household tasks in Nazareth! When the great and blessed day of the Lord shall come, in which there shall be no tears, nor sorrow, nor pain, it will find men bending to their tasks, diligent in business and praising the Lord.

THE ETHICS OF
GOOD MANNERS



THE ETHICS OF GOOD MANNERS

GOD LOVES ADVERBS

WHEN Richard Baxter once talked of marrying a woman of good disposition rather than seek for one eminent for piety, he excused his preference, which might have seemed strange in a godly man, by saying that doubtless the grace of God could dwell with many persons whom he could not live with. He certainly showed much sagacity, and planned wisely for his own comfort and peace of mind. His experience had evidently taught him that "perfect love may be at work in a soul without making it perfectly lovable." It takes a good deal of grace to make a soul abound in the graces; and much time is likely to elapse between seed-

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time and harvest. There are a great many uninteresting, not to say disagreeable, saints. One of the problems of eschatology is certain to be concerned with the disposition that can be made of such natures, without disturbing the harmony of the moral universe. Their virtues and their consecration entitle them to heaven, but their ungracious bearing or their unpleasant manners wholly unfit them for that realm of peace and light. It is not easy to see how the joys of heaven could be secure if certain scowling saints are to be there. In their society eternal bliss itself would have its drawbacks. Unless some Christians change very much after they leave this mortal flesh, there will be some extremely unattractive angels!

Now it is one of the oversights which good Christians often make, to forget that it is part of our moral growth to develop those graces and refinements of character which make us agreeable to one another. There is much to be

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done, even after conscience and will are rectified, to make our manifestation of the spirit that is in us acceptable to others. It is one thing to be good, and quite another to be agreeably good; one thing to have the grace of God within, and another to show it gracefully to others. The manner of expressing Christian character is worthy of more attention than we commonly bestow upon it. There is an old proverb to the effect that "God loves adverbs." That is a good way of saying that he would not only have us do, but do well. The proper outcome of a Christian life is a courteous behavior. It is the business of the Lord's servant not only to behave himself "wisely" but also "in a perfect way."

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NEED OF MORE STRESS ON MANNER

It is a pity that it should be needful to lay special emphasis on manner and on manners. But the times require it. The distemper of our day is haste; and haste ruins manner. The workman of our day is content if he gets his work done at all, regardless of whether it is well done or not. The Christian of our age is content if he keeps the commandments, no matter how. But character without grace is a forbidding thing; and performance may be so ill a thing that what it has done must all be undone.

Strength is no excuse for ugliness, any more than beauty excuses weakness. It is unfair to a noble nature to have it utter itself ungraciously. It may be that Thomas Carlyle was a lamb at heart. He will be remembered as a bear in his manner, and he left a bear's hard mark upon the world. Men do not forgive bad and surly manners. Time has drawn no oblivion over

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Dr. Johnson's gruffness, nor over Alexander Pope's quarrelsomeness. Their bad manners are remembered as a blot on the shield which no amount of genius will quite rub out. In the same way, we cannot be allowed to plead the pressure of life, the quickened pace at which we move, the wear and tear of our complex and taxing existence, as an excuse for slighting the civilities and omitting the amenities of life. A true courtesy will never be balked of its kindly purpose by the pressure of a hurried life. Courtesy can learn, if need be, to express itself in monosyllables, and the language of politeness does not absolutely demand long sentences.



GENTLENESS OF BEHAVIOR AN ELEMENT OF HARMONY

Moreover, we ought to cultivate a refined behavior as an aid to harmonious living. There is no such lubricator, to smooth and to ease our

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lives, as graceful manners. Even virtue becomes offensive when it is clothed in rough words and an ungracious manner. It is easier to take a slight from some men and women than to receive a favor from others, because the favor is rudely done, and the sharpness of the slight is dulled by a courteous manner. Reproof which is delicate is more acceptable than coarse and indelicate praise. How often a real kindness is done so brusquely and so curtly that it stings and hurts; and how many times are denials made so gently that they almost seem to be favors conferred. One man will give a refusal with a handshake and a bow which are like an opiate to the sense of disappointment; while his next neighbor will toss you a benefit so rudely that you are too indignant to pick it up. The discords of life are all too many already, and there is no need to add to them by making another between a kindness and its method. And he who realizes the need there is of smoothing life's

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roughness, cushioning its angles and oiling its hot bearings, will never sneer at "fine manners" as at something trivial and trifling. They are the upholstery of life.

This is the reason why what we call "etiquette" deserves the emphasis which is laid upon it. From some points of view it seems as if the rules and the customs of polite society were the fad of the foolish and the idle, arbitrary, needless, and without significance. What matter the codes and the rules, so that the spirit be kind and considerate? The answer is, that etiquette is the common agreement of people who have much intercourse with one another, to promote a good understanding and to facilitate their intercourse. It is the common language by which these people try to express their feelings and convey their intentions; and one might as easily expect to understand the spirit without the letter, as to get at the disposition without some form. Politeness is more than a formality;

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it is a device of society to promote ease of intercourse, prevent misunderstandings, and suppress disagreeables. There is no more insincerity or hollowness in a polite exterior, and the observance of certain rules of behavior, than there is in self-restraint and obedience to law. There is no more hypocrisy in smothering the yawn which tells your associates that you are tired or bored, than there is in suppressing the groan which tells that you are in pain. A serene and pleasing exterior is prompted by the desire to save other men's feelings. That principle is the cornerstone of every system of etiquette and every code of manners. A wise writer on the practical ethics of modern life has well said of such rules and customs: "They are for the most part founded on common sense and pure benevolence. They are the very best that can be desired for securing the highest degree of ease, comfort, and refined pleasure in social intercourse."

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THE BASIS OF MANNERS IS CHARACTER

When we have said this much we have come close to the all-important truth that the basis of manners is character. It is impossible for the man of unkind and selfish heart to be thoroughly polite. Somewhere the rough edges of his nature will push through and destroy the illusion. The only firm title to the "grand old name of gentleman" is a heartful of fine instincts. Fine manners are only to be learned in the school of godliness. The art of saying the right thing at the right time, of meeting the occasion with the fitting behavior, can be learned only in proportion as we learn gentleness and regard for others, a quick sympathy and a keen self-respect. The true culture of manners is the culture of morals. Because the only behavior which is sure to be always courteous, kindly, gentle, refined, is behavior whose sources are in the heart. "If I am only a vulgar and ordinary woman," said a

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distinguished French actress, "during twenty of the four-and-twenty hours of the day, whatever effort I may make I shall be only an ordinary or vulgar woman in Agrippina or Semiramis during the remaining four." She knew that manner is more than a veneer put over a cheap nature to conceal its quality. It is rather the finish which brings out the real grain of the character.

For behavior is not a thing to be learned by rote. It cannot be written into a book. The rules are worthless except as they become the tools of a fine spirit. No man ever became an expert in football or in golf by studying rules and treatises on the games. He must bring something to the business himself, in the way of enthusiasm, pluck, and sympathy, or he will never master even the rudiments. So when a churl thinks he will pass as a gentleman by mastering good manners, he does not realize the thoroughness of the process required. To realize that ideal, one must cease to be a mechanic,

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working by rules, and become a creator of moods and of dispositions, acting from the inspirations of a noble heart. "Special precepts," says some one, "are not to be thought of; a talent for doing well includes them all." The mark of the heart is on all the conduct; and the only true gentlefolk are those who are gentle by nature and by habit.



THE TESTS OF THE GENTLEMAN

Take the word "gentleman" which is so often used and so seldom used aright. It sums up all that Christianity has done to create a noble type of manhood, in its social relations. And the corner stone of this manhood is a character formed on the models afforded by Jesus. A gentleman, in the highest sense, is a man who has applied the ideals of the Nazarene to his everyday life among men. It is Augustus Hare, I think, who says that "a Christian is God Almighty's gen-

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tleman.” He gives us the key to the truest use of the word. Dissociate it from all the foolish traditions society has hung about it. Think of it as describing real distinctions and not artificial ones. Then see what noble proportions it takes and what a fine type it describes. It does not mean a man who owns a dress coat, nor one who belongs to the most select society, nor one who has membership in the fashionable clubs. A gentleman is not an idle man in distinction from a workingman. He is not a dude nor a dawdler. His hands may be soft, or they may be hard and rough with work. He may have inherited the blue blood of the aristocrat, or the red drops of the laborer’s veins. A gentleman is simply a man who applies the highest principles of justice, love, honor, and purity to the common affairs of daily life. He is one in whom the highest ideals lead to the highest acts. His book of etiquette is the Sermon on the Mount. His social code is based on the two Great Com-

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mandments. His society is whatsoever community God puts him in. He has no badge, no uniform, but you may always know him by his generous word, his quick conscience, his kindly acts and bearing. Try men by these tests and you will be ready to understand and assent to the quaint saying of Juliana Berners, in a very old book on Heraldry, "Of the offspring of the gentilman Jafeth came Habraham, Moyses, Aron, and the profettys ; and also the king of the High lyne of Mary, of whom that gentilman Jhesus was born."



THE ELEMENTS OF GOOD MANNERS

Perhaps the first element of good manners is self-respect. All true ethics must begin with one's self. Jesus has made the measure by which we are to gauge our duty to our fellow-man, — the esteem in which we hold ourselves. For the second Great Commandment reads, "Thou

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shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." There is little hope that a man will honor the amenities of life unless he has first learned to honor himself, to treat himself as a son of God. We respect others because we deem them too good for debasing things. We need to have the same respect for ourselves. For that is the tribute we pay God's handiwork in our own natures. Self-respect teaches a man to think of himself, not as the poor, faulty thing he has made himself, but as the honorable thing God means him to be and will at last help him to become.

The first fruit of self-respect is dignity. Not stiffness, not labored formality, not prudish dread of the familiar in speech or in bearing, but that high-mindedness which will not stoop to incivility, or meanness, or vulgarity. A king may play at football without any impairment of his dignity, provided he plays as a king ought, with chivalry, honesty, and fairness. Such dignity as this is a bulwark. It protects the nature from

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unworthy and degrading things. It shuts out the intrusive scandal and the low jest. It was such a dignity that characterized General Grant, and was finely shown in the incident told of the rebuke he administered to a man who once attempted to tell a foul story in his presence. "I believe," said the fellow, with a leer around the company, "that there are no ladies present." "No," quickly rejoined the General, "but there are gentlemen here." A true dignity raises the soul above the unclean, the mean, and the trivial, as a mountain lifts itself above the miasma and the poison reek of the low-lying swamps.

A third element of grace in the character is kindliness. That perhaps is the fundamental trait in a gentle life. It is a life of honest tenderness toward others, of care for their sensibilities, of generous interest in their good. A kindly heart is a better guide to the best behavior than all the manuals ever printed. For it prompts to the gracious word, the thoughtful

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deed, the fitting action. At bottom a kindly heart is a loving heart, and that brings all courtesy to its true basis in the spirit of Jesus. For courtesy is nothing else in the world than love in its society dress. It is the Golden Rule adapted to the drawing-room and the street. If a man with a gentle soul, impelled by love and sensible of its requirements, is put face to face with any problem in politeness, the chances are that he will solve it correctly. There are more intuitions of propriety in a kind heart than in all the codes which fashion ever devised.



GOOD MANNERS MATURE SLOWLY

Such a behavior as we have been considering is no rapid growth. It is not the happy chance of inheritance nor the sudden gift of conversion. The graces of manner are the last fruits of a fine character. When a man builds his house, he

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first looks after the stability of his building, its safety, warmth, tightness, and strength. Then he turns to its decoration. He adorns it within and without, every art is called upon to make it beautiful to the sight. A savage thinks he has a home when he has a hut. But a civilized man must have some beauty in his surroundings. So as the heart grows rich and ripe in Christian experience, it aspires to more than the merely necessary virtues, and seeks to adorn these with the Christian graces. It aims not alone at honesty and justice and temperance; but it would add to these a gentle manner, a sympathetic spirit, a considerate mind. We may not only seek to speak the truth, but to speak it with a low voice. It is good to give the needed alms, but better still to do it with delicacy and regard to the feelings of the recipients. It was right for my friend to refuse a glass of wine, but he need not have been so rude as to do it by saying, "I have no small vices."

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It is a great pity that we content ourselves so long with the elementary virtues, and do not advance to the finer and the higher forms of living. "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." We need a richer spiritual life. But we are more frugal in our spiritual providing than in our physical. We become so accustomed to making a little go a great way in material things, that we think the same rule and practice can be observed in laying up treasures in heaven. So we live on short allowance of the virtues, stinting ourselves on the bread of life, as if the more meanly we live on earth the more sumptuously we shall fare in heaven. God loves rich hearts; and men like something besides spiritual skeletons. They love to see Christian men and women who will not stop short with the forgiveness of their sins, but will go on adding to the strength of righteousness the beauty of holiness.

AN
HONEST
MAN



AN HONEST MAN

A FUNDAMENTAL VIRTUE

IT is not easy to name any one virtue as the keystone or the cornerstone of all the rest. For the virtues are mutually dependent, and no one of them can stand alone. But if any virtue comes near to being at the foundation of all, it is honesty, sincerity, the love and the practice of what is true. No man can be himself, the real self, the self that God meant him to be, except he be a true man, living the truth and loving it. The very first condition of a wholesome natural spiritual relation with self and with God is honesty of mind. To be insincere is to play at hide and seek with one's own soul and to try to conceal one's self from God. It is to be rotten at the roots of one's nature. It is to be uncer-

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tain of one's own self. As physical health is only possible when all the tissues are sound and all the functions correct, so honesty means moral soundness, means truth "in the inward parts."

In the same way all social good rests finally upon truth and honesty. When men cease to care for these, the bottom falls out from society, and its most cherished institutions will disappear in a general leakage. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord," because they are a sign of general moral degeneracy. "Man is everywhere a born enemy of lies," as Carlyle says, because he knows falsehood to be the forerunner of all conceivable evils. Especially is it the signal for that uncertainty and doubt which prevent all the ordinary transactions of life, from the operations of the market to the doings of the home circle. The Almighty himself has set us the example of the value of certitude, in His provision that the course of nature shall be orderly and reliable. It would practically check all the

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operations of our daily life if we lived in a world which was irregular, uncertain, freaky. Suppose that we could not count upon the procession of the seasons. Who would plant or till the soil? If winter and spring were liable at any time to change places ; if we might have snowstorms in August, or if haytime might fall in November ; if sunrise were as likely as not to be deferred till evening, and if the earth turned sometimes one way and sometimes the other — what would become of us or of our enterprises? Chaos would reign, if ever the material world were to go crazy like this.

So it would if we could not trust men's conduct, believe that they will do as they promise, that they will speak the truth, that speech will tally with character. Every period of moral degeneracy in the world is a time when men turn liars. The well-being of society depends on the general honesty of mankind. Prosperity only lasts as long as we stick to the truth. And if any man would

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bear his part in the work of keeping life moving smoothly, he must make his personal life frank and truthful — an honest expression of his inner self.



THE DIFFICULTY OF BEING ONE'S SELF

Yet, strangely enough, almost the hardest thing in this world is to be one's self. It takes a remarkable man to be perfectly frank. Honesty involves so many other virtues — presupposes them and calls for them — that only a pretty good man dares be perfectly open. Cæsar Augustus* used to say that the conduct of every member of his family ought to be such that it might be blazoned daily in the acts and journals of the state. But he probably knew that the actual behavior of his household would make them all extremely reluctant to have such an announcement made. The ideal is perfect.

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To be entirely right within, and then to have our conduct express ourselves in all candor and sincerity is the highest conception of personal character and conduct. It is the goal we are probably approaching in that time when we are to see eye to eye, to see even as we are seen. But we are few of us ready for such frankness of life.

For, as we have seen, no man is likely to live an honest life except so far as he is able to live a good life. When we try to be honest, we find ourselves tripped at every turn by our vices, because we all aim to keep up the appearance of virtue, and we cannot conceal our faults without more or less of deceit. They force us to play double somewhere and somehow. Who of us would let his neighbor see him just as he is, just as God sees him? Who would not shrink from having the veil torn away from his heart and all the secret thoughts which hide therein, all unworthy desires, all wayward impulses, all

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the black spirits which flit to and fro, the unwelcome brood of our darker passions—to have them all exposed to human gaze? We are not ready to be honest. It is hard to be ourselves because those selves are so far from what we would have them be. We are glad to borrow even the seeming of virtue, and take a certain superficial merit from what we appear to be, from what we want to be.



THE DEEP ROOTS OF HONESTY

An honest life, then, involves much more than truth-speaking and lip-sincerity. Honesty has roots deeper than the tongue. It takes hold on the innermost soul. Except we be right throughout—in thought, affection, purpose—we cannot hope to be reckoned among the really honest. For honesty in its broad meaning is the correspondence between the outward

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sign and the inward substance. It is the maintenance of reality, the hatred of sham. It is making the label describe the real contents of the package. It is listing the stock according to the real value of the business. It calls a spade a spade, a lie a lie, a theft by its own disgraceful name. It subscribes to the creed it really believes, and never wears heaven's livery to do the devil's work. Whenever the fact is knowingly distorted in the statement; when the show is not verified by the substance; when fulfillment is wilfully made to come short of the promise, there is dishonesty in some shape or other. When yea means yea, and nay means nay, that is honesty. But when yea means a little more than yea, and nay means a little less than nay, the margin "cometh of evil." So that the idea of an honest life draws the line at once at every fraud and every deceit, at misrepresentation and evasion, and every repudiation of promises. All the shuffling pretexts by which

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men dodge the penalties of the statute books, whose laws they are breaking, are lies and frauds, whether they are perpetrated by great corporations, impeding commerce with their secret rates, or little individuals, stealing from the public by dodging their taxes. It is not honest to enjoy a reputation for uprightness which you do not deserve, and to pray in public for what you sneer at in private, and to say to men's faces what you deny behind their backs. Whatever savors of duplicity, of unfaithfulness, of evasion, of fraudulent concealment, of secrecy for unfair gain—all these things are but so many varying forms of a lie! And if the definition makes liars of us all, why so much the worse for us.



HONESTY BEGINS IN SINCERITY

No man, therefore, can be honest with his fellowmen, who is not honest, first of all, with him-

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self. To be sure there are men who are perfectly frank with themselves, and admit that they are knaves, who deceive their fellowmen. But no man ever played at fast and loose with his own conscience who was honest with his fellows. One may be honest with himself and false to his fellows ; he cannot be false with himself and true to them. If you will cheat yourself, you will cheat your neighbor. Why not? You are not likely to use him any better than you use yourself. If you can cheat yourself with fallacies or frauds, you will not fail to cheat him — if you can ! Beware of the man who can argue himself into believing what he wants to believe, and who is ready with a plausible excuse for every questionable undertaking to which he is inclined. He will not hesitate to try his fatal facility for self-deception upon others. Sincerity, honest dealing with self, is the very first condition of an honest life. A man must know himself, what he believes, what he loves, what he feels, and

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must be true to this self-knowledge, so far as God will let him, else he can never be an honest man. Self-deception is a common trick of weak minds. But as the poet says :

“The worst of all frauds is to cheat one’s self,
All sin is easy after that.”

So if you see your friend winding himself in a tangle of sophistries in order to tie himself fast to a creed which it is inconvenient for him to renounce, you may as well watch him. If he will begin by cheating himself, he may end by doing the same by his neighbors. If you find him plausibly persuading himself that it is right to do whatever is financially profitable, you would better not indorse his notes. He is an unsafe man. If he can conscientiously cheat himself, he will have no difficulty in getting his conscience to let him do as much for you. If you learn that he believes it to be quite right to pay money for votes at elections, you will make a serious blun-

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der if you intrust him with public office ; for the man who is ready to buy up the votes is quite equal to selling out his constituents. The most dangerous man in business or in politics is he who tricks his conscience into compliance with his selfish interest, and calls his sordidness by the sacred names which belong by right only to the noble and the pure acts of sincere men.



THE DISHONESTY OF CANT

It is here that we touch the root of all that passes under the name of *cant*. This common weakness of small natures is the insincere use of great phrases, of words full of solemn meaning to which the heart of him who utters them makes no response. It is the attempt to make a man's speech stand as the guarantee of virtue, integrity, or piety, which does not exist in his character. It is hypocrisy talking for effect. It is Satan

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stealing the vocabulary of the saints. No wonder that Thomas Carlyle, raging against all sorts of falsehood and shams, calls cant "a double-distilled lie, the second power of a lie." There is the cant of patriotism which shouts for the flag while the orator picks the pockets of his fellow patriots. There is the cant of politics, which talks of great principles to hide mean schemes for self-interest; it talks grand truths and votes loaves and fishes. There is the cant of culture, which professes a love of art, of books, of music, of science which has no deeper roots than those of the tongue. How many young people are drawn into this species of hypocrisy. They are led to think it is the correct thing to like certain books, to admire certain pictures or music, and they fall in with the fashion and do as the crowd does. It seems like a confession of ignorance or stupidity not to. We feel as if it were almost a duty to profess an enthusiasm we do not really feel. But let no

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young man or woman be misled. This is only a refined form of hypocrisy. It is the feeble false witness of the would-be cultured. Do not yield to the subtle temptation. If you do not like the book which everybody is praising, say so. If you do not see the beauty in the picture or the symphony which others are raving over, admit it without fear or hesitation. It is not necessary that you know all that others know, that you feel all that others claim to feel, that you like all that your neighbors do. It is necessary that you be honest. Better be sincere and despised for it than admired for what you do not possess. Better be an honest ignoramus than a canting, make-believe pretender to knowledge!

Most offensive of all insincerity of this sort is the cant of religion. We hear it on the lips of those who make a show of piety, but whose hearts are cold, worldly, and selfish. It is cant of the worst description to pray for blessings on the

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poor whom you lift no finger to help. It is cant to murmur the phrases of the litany on Sunday after you have robbed the public by a stock-watering financial job on Friday and Saturday. It is blasphemous cant to talk jealously of loyalty and honor for the name of Jesus the Christ, the while you are ranged on the side of everything against which he contended — of war, of greed, of cruelty, of hate — stoning his new prophets, while you build monuments to their fathers, and crucifying Jesus afresh in the person of his brethren and yours. I once knew a man who said of his pure-hearted wife that she was moral but not religious, while he himself was religious but not moral; and even as he said it he was torturing her daily to her death by his infidelities and his falseness, which she was bearing in the silent martyrdom of white-souled womanhood! When one encounters such cant in religion's fair name, he turns with joy to the passage in Revelation which declares that all liars shall

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have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. Such hypocrisy and such cant require the purgative of searching and purifying flames in order to be refined into honesty!



THE HONEST MAN A "REALIST"

But if sincerity is the first step toward an honest life, the second step is a love of realities. An honest man prefers to see things as they are, to know the truth, to live in a real world. There is no peace, there is no security, there is no joy in a false world. He who lives in one dwells in a "fool's paradise." He is surrounded by perils he will not see; he is within reach of gain or power, but he will not listen to the voice which bids him grasp them. There can be no satisfaction in a life so blind and timid as this, and certainly no progress can start from such a life. Honesty is the foundation of the scientific spirit,

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and has given us all our knowledge of the world as it is. Honesty is reforming the theology of the world, by trying all things by the tests of the real and the proven. Faith itself cannot stand if it is contradicted by the known facts of existence. So the honest man will always be the man who seeks and loves the real world, the true world, the actual world, above all things else. If you would be an honest soul, face the facts. Turn to the truth. Let in the light. Try to see things as they are. Learn to understand the world that is. Be a realist so far as that means basing your life upon realities. There is no other foundation which will endure. There is no satisfaction in living on lies. There can be no real good in a world which is all a sham. If a man makes such a world for himself, out of his prejudices or his fears or his ignorance or his optimism, it is none the more inhabitable. The business man knows that when he and his fellow-merchants have built up a false commercial en-

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vironment, based on credits that have no assets behind them, and investments that represent no value, and enterprises that are all air and water, their unreal world will always tumble in upon itself, in a panic which will rattle down all this imaginary prosperity in absolute ruin. The doctors will tell you that when they have disclosed a real world in which mosquitoes are recognized as evil factors, and fresh air as the foe of disease, yellow fever disappears and tuberculosis is halted. Thus it is that honesty in facing the facts of life lays the foundations of permanent and abiding good, while dishonesty, evasiveness, temporizing with facts, undermines the dwellings of all our happiness. Somehow prosperity and blessing are linked with the knowledge of things as they are. We get most out of a world which we know to be a real world. That was what underlay the thought of Paul when he said "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The motto of Tufts College is a singu-

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larly apt one for an institution of learning, — “Pax et Lux.” There is no peace without light. The peace, the tranquillity, the security of the human soul grow as its light grows. One could have no more splendid motto for his intellectual career than this. He could have no keener incentive to honesty. For as he values his own peace of mind, he will live in the light and by the light of God’s perfect truth.



SOME LAUDABLE HINDRANCES

Not all the hindrances to honesty, the temptations to shade or color the truth, are either contemptible or blameworthy. Sometimes we swerve from the straight line of truth because we are tender-hearted. We shrink from hurting other hearts. Love tells many lies ; sympathy deals extensively in pleasant fiction ; for love mistakes its duty, and sympathy is blind to the

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trouble it breeds by keeping back the truth. More men in this world have been spoiled by blind flattery than ever were crushed by discouragement or criticism. Love has defeated its own desires many a time by a false reticence, an unwise concealment of the truth. Yet soft-hearted friends will always flatter the unfortunate victims of their attachment, keeping back wholesome truths, suffering faults to grow unchallenged, or permitting unsuspecting feet to tread unwarned the paths of peril to happiness. It is a morbid and mistaken sympathy which declines to be candid for fear of inflicting a hurt. Tell the truth, though your friend may wince. The candor of a friend may save a man from the sneers of his enemy. The truth may always be spoken in love and no harm done. Candor does not imply bluntness ; the honest word need be neither rude, nor brusque, nor harsh. But frankness born of affection never hurt anybody. Happy is the man who is surrounded by honest

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and outspoken friends ! Their honesty will be his health !



PERSONAL HONESTY AND PUBLIC VIRTUES

There is no doubt that our times call loudly for honest men and women. The public is shocked and shaken day after day by revelations of falsehood and unfaithfulness in public office, in the high places of business, in the great schemes of national policy. And we cry out for laws and for officials, for charters and for commissions, as remedies and as preventives of the evils which terrify us. How many schemes have been urged upon our generation, looking to social regeneration and the cure of the ills that corrupt the public life. But there is only remedy for dishonesty in finance and in politics and in theology. Give us honest men and women. Give us souls that love truth and hate lies.

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Give us minds that cannot be contented in an atmosphere of sophistry, and consciences which rebel and cry out in the presence of deceit. There are no reforms and no palliatives for present evils, save in a generation of youth who love the truth, growing up into a generation of mature people who live the truth. The world needs your honest voice and mine, uplifted against the enormous frauds and lies and treacheries of our life. And always the man who leads off encourages his neighbors to follow. One brave man makes a score like himself. Honesty, like all the other virtues, is contagious ! He who will be its spokesman shall bless this age of ours more than if he endowed a thousand libraries or built a city of universities.

THE
MINISTRY OF
WANT



THE MINISTRY OF WANT

A TURNING POINT IN LIFE

IN telling the story of the prodigal son, Jesus dwells for a moment on the episode in the young man's life when "he began to be in want." When we hear the oft-told tale we do not always realize the moral purport of that incident. On the surface it appears like a time for pity. It was really a time for joy.

That was the most fortunate moment in the prodigal's life. It was his turning point. It was the end of his prodigality, the beginning of his true sonship. This was his awakening hour. Henceforth he was to be a new man. And the voice which roused him was the cry of his own need. He came to his senses because he began to be in want. And in that sentence we have

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the forecast of his future. It is the prophecy of the robe, the shoes, and the ring, the fatted calf, the festal music, and the father's joy. All these blessings ripened from the seed sown in those furrows of pain, misery, and hardship, in the fields when the swine were herded. Or, to change the point of view, if you stand at that moment of blessedness and achievement when the prodigal has entered again into the home life, you may look back over his past and say with truth that the real beginning of his better life was when "he began to be in want." It all came from this hour of need, of lack, of suffering and shame.



WANT THE MOTHER OF ABUNDANCE

So, too, standing at any point of human attainment and looking for the point where the beginnings of that achievement were made, we find it lying close to some human need. Want is the

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mother of abundance. Our plenty is the harvest of seed sown in our poverty. The bounteous harvests which ripen in the broad fields of our land in the summer days and all the abundance they stand for have had their sowing in deep furrows of human need. They are ripening because men have hungered, because they have gone naked, because they have suffered cold and weakness. The rich tilth of the prairies has matured from the poverty of our forefathers. So far as human effort has to do with the matter, our thanksgivings are the fruit of our complaints. We are rich because we have been poor. The fullness of the granaries to-day is the outcome of man's emptiness yesterday. The harvest is gathered because of hunger; famine and fatness are cause and effect.

This is by no means a paradoxical truth. Its reason lies deep in the nature of things. The links in the logic by which we prove its truth are very simple. There is a familiar proverb to the

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effect that "necessity is the mother of invention." There is another, less familiar, but a shade closer to our line of statement, which expresses the experience of mankind in saying that "want is the mother of industry." "Nothing," said Addison, "makes men sharper than want." When men begin to feel their needs, they set about to supply them, and then and there begin the effort, the struggle, the endless endeavor to bring plenty in place of poverty and to enrich the waste places of human want. The hunger of the primeval man, the bodily want which has urged him evermore to get himself a better dinner, has given us the flour mills of Minneapolis and the packing houses of Chicago. Because he once shivered in the wet and cold he built himself shelters more and ever more elaborate. till we have the modern residence, the perfection of convenience and comfort. His need of social benefit and protection has led to his ceaseless experiments in government. It is his need of God, his craving for

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some knowledge and relation to the divine life which has led him again and again to the altars reared in the name of that mystery, the Eternal, the Infinite One. The whole structure and machinery of man's inward and outward life has been reared and built in answer to the imperative voice of his mighty wants. It was a deep reading of the law of all life which led the Master to incorporate into the beatitudes those two pregnant sentences, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" and "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." In man's spiritual nature, as in all his other relations, need supplies the impulse which moves him to all his achievements. His wants beget his virtues.



A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

It follows, of course, that the estate we so often count a cross and a disadvantage is really our

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blessing and our help. We are at war with our own best good when we sigh for a condition in which our wants will be so fully supplied that we never have a sense of need. If a man could be so full and satisfied as that, he would be the most unfortunate of his kind. For wanting the feeling of want, he would miss the incentive to his noblest works. He who has no sense of lack lacks the most vital sense. He who is full is really empty. Nay, more than that, the finest delights of life grow out of these very wants. It has been well said that it is want which makes life worth living. Want of exercise makes motion a pleasure. Want of food gives the relish to a man's need. The want he has of rest makes his bed so welcome at nightfall. His craving for knowledge imparts the liveliest zest to study. And the resistless passion for power rouses those sturdy ambitions whose development and fulfillment are the highest satisfaction he knows.

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SIMPLICITY NOT ALWAYS GOOD

We do not forget the doctrine of our time that our wants are our greatest weakness ; that we multiply them to our own cost ; that the more we have the worse off we are ; that complexity is hurtful and simplicity the ideal condition. But that is only half true. Such prophets of this extreme and frugal economy in our wants, as Thoreau, are untrustworthy and misleading guides, teaching us that our only happiness consists in pruning our wants, reducing our necessities, living on the shortest rations and sleeping on the hardest of beds. They create an unjust and wrongful suspicion of the most simple and helpful needs. Fielding had that wrong prejudice in his mind when he said, "It is not from nature but from education and habits our wants are chiefly derived." The truth of this saying is not a reproach against habit and education, as

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Fielding seems to have intended it to be, but rather a fact wholly to their credit. It is true that we have more wants as we grow in intelligence and knowledge. We want more because we know more. And the more we know the more we shall continue to want. A creature with only one organ, like a polyp, gets on with very little, but his life amounts to as little as his wants. The modern man has a thousand wants for every one that his ancestor, the cave dweller, had; but he is a thousand times more of a man. He wants a better house, but that house makes him a better home. He wants better food, but his food nourishes him better. He wants more intercourse with his fellow men but that intercourse broadens and uplifts him. So that we must agree with those who say that, "True living is ceaseless wanting."

To be sure, some wants are morbid cravings — an unwholesome, vicious evil, the creation of our sins and our follies. But that

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very act only goes to show that the good unfolding within us must also develop wants after its kind, and that these wants are proofs, not of degeneracy, weakness, or folly, but of expanding life, nobler ideals, a diviner spirit. There is such a thing as overworking the call for simplicity. Real wants, worthy, healthy ones, are to be respected — they are determined by the soul itself.



OUR WANTS REQUIRE MORAL CONTROL

But our wants need the guidance and the control of our moral natures. They must be formed and they must be directed by conscience and by love. He who carried the tests of righteousness back into the very soul of a man, made it apparent how deep in the desires and cravings of that soul is rooted its moral qualities. Jesus went back of deed to desire for the real virtue

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or vice of the man. That is good evidence that the man is as much bound to govern and guide his desires, his wants, as he is to control his acts. The man who lets his love of money grow unrestrained and undisciplined is as great a sinner as he who acquires unlawfully. He who permits his desire, his want, if you will, for pleasure, diversion, amusement, to run wild and get in the way of his duty or his responsibilities, is as truly under censure as if he committed instead of omitted. But let a man's desires be in right and honest directions and he cannot have too many of them. Let him "covet earnestly the best things" and his covetousness becomes a grand and glorious virtue.

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THE BLESSING OF UNGRATIFIED WANT

Under such a disposition as this, even ungratified wants become a blessing. The unsatisfied want of a righteous man makes him a better man still. We are helped and uplifted by the things we crave rightfully, even though we have them not. Such wants are a spur to ambition. They are a discipline to the heart. They refine the whole life. The desire for a better home than one can ever have, makes the home one has better than it could possibly be without this desire. The poor man who wishes that he might have large wealth to bestow in good works is more generous with the little he has because of his ambition. The childless couple are tenderer to the children of others because of the yearning, never gratified, for children of their own. There is something which enlarges and dignifies a man in these wishes for good things never to be realized. You would better want a virtue or a bless-

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ing you could never have than live satisfied with that which you had attained.

“To let the new life in, we know
Desire must ope the portal ;
Perhaps the longing to be so
Helps make the soul immortal.”



GOD'S HAND IN OUR ENVIRONMENT

Because God flung this child of His love, naked and hungry and blind and deaf, out upon the rocks of a forbidding world, where the sun should scorch him and the rain and the snow should chill him, and the sea wash him, and the beasts contend with him ; because of this untoward environment, arousing all his needs, he has grown strong, self reliant, confident, triumphant. Out of the crying needs of his condition and his instinct to satisfy those needs, man has moved steadily up, till, from being but a little

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better than the beast he has become only a little lower than the angels. God gave man the discipline of his wants, that He might also confer the reward of his attainments. He made him needy that He might afterward make him full. He made him poor in spirit that He might give him the kingdom of heaven. He made him to be dissatisfied with exile and estrangement that He might lead him to Himself. It is a happy day for the soul when it begins to be in want of God. Out of that consciousness comes its salvation and its eternal blessing.

THE
DISCIPLINE OF
ABUNDANCE



THE DISCIPLINE OF ABUNDANCE

THE apostle Paul declares in one of his letters, "I know how to abound." When one reads those words he is inclined to congratulate the great apostle, across all the centuries, on one of the most remarkable achievements in the world. For to know how to abound, how to deal with ease and plenty, with wealth or power, with great knowledge or unbroken popularity, is about the last and finest attainment of a godly man. If one can possess great possessions, can wield the things he has accumulated, can master his masteries over this world and its resources, he is a real conqueror and one of the rarest spectacles we have the chance of seeing in this world. And yet how few there are who recognize any peril or

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any problem in the use and enjoyment of abundance! We hear much about helping men to bear poverty, about encouraging, warning, instructing those who lack and are down in the world and have bad luck; but how many times have we heard anybody proposing to do anything for the rich, for the prosperous, for those who abound? How few societies there are for teaching them to be strong, to be cautious, to be wise in the use of what has come into their hands. It is hard work, everybody thinks, to be poor and yet wise and strong and unselfish and devoted; but few realize that it is at least equally hard to be rich. There is in the city of New York a large and important "Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor." I have never heard of any society there or elsewhere for improving the condition of the rich. But if there had been one, I suppose it never would have had any applicants, because very few people ever think that they belong in this class. People are even more sensitive about

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calling themselves rich than they are about admitting themselves to be poor. So it seems as if a little thought might profitably be spent upon this peril, to see who are in it and how they may avert it.



VARIETIES OF ABUNDANCE

But let us be understood. The apostle is not speaking here merely of wealth, riches in money. He means all sorts of abundance; he has in mind abundance of all that men count as prosperity, resources, comfort, the means of personal satisfaction. "To abound" may mean to have plenty of money, or it may mean to have wealth of knowledge. It may have reference to plenty of friends or of chances at success or of moral advantage or religious light. All these kinds of abundance put a strain on the men and women who have them. They constitute a real discipline, as

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severe, as relentless, as luminous in its revelation of the man's inner power and character as the mere possession of property. Riches and abundance are broad, general terms, of which material wealth is only one item.

For riches and abundance are prized because they will obtain privileges and enjoyment; and whatever will gain these for us we may count as our wealth. The possession of special training, of knowledge, or of skill; the social aptitudes which make men favorites among their fellows; the hopeful philosophy of life which makes one an optimist; all these constitute varieties of that abundance, that material for larger life, which put its possessor in the ranks of the privileged class. Good health is a species of abundance. So is a good education. So is the reputation gained by an honest and an upright life. So that there are far more people among the privileged than are accustomed to reckon themselves there. And in no previous age of the world have

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there been so many as in these days of ours, in which we see so much that eases and enhances life, put at the disposal of all men.



THE MENACE OF OUR AGE

I do not know of any peril more real and imminent to-day, among at least a large class of people such as you and I have to deal with, than this one of abundance. For there never was a time in this world's history when the world's life was so productive of riches, knowledge, power, as to-day. The Secretary of State told us a while ago that the excess of our exports over our imports for the last fiscal year of the nation was \$660,000,000 — nearly double what it was for a whole century previous. These bewildering figures tell only the material side of the tale. The same story of abundance, of power, of resources expanded,

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might be cited from the history of knowledge, of science, of invention, of moral reform. The princes and kings of old never controlled such fabulous resources as the every-day man of our times. And they are a tremendous menace. If we do not know how to use them, they will destroy us. If we cannot control them, they will overwhelm us. What are we doing with our plenty? Do we possess our possessions or do our possessions possess us?

The first task, then, of him who has is that old first duty of self-preservation. When things get away from mind and spirit they become as destructive as the avalanche and the tidal wave. When abundance runs loose, ungoverned by wisdom and by love, it is worse than want. And the first thing it harms is its own possessor. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth;" but his death may be compassed by this abundance! We have many times seen the house-

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wife exhausted and slain by her furniture and china and bric-a-brac; the popular man by his engagements, his sports, his manifold interests; the business man by the multiplicity of his enterprises. They have been mastered by all these things, compelled to surrender time and labor to them, so tangled up in them that they became indispensable; then the things, not the people, were masters; and we have all felt that he who has, without knowing how to guide, control, administer, does not know how to abound.



LEARNING TO BE INDEPENDENT OF THINGS

So the task of him who has many possessions, many friends, many opportunities, many privileges, is to learn, first of all, how to keep himself clear of them all, using them freely, frankly, joyfully, yet always ready to lay them down, do without them, lose them all, with the

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same freedom and joyousness. When he comes to feel that he could never be himself without his horses or his sports, his dinners or his companions, his business or his friends, he is in danger of becoming mastered by his plenty and has his lesson to learn. But if he knows that were he stripped of them all he could still face life without flinching, without mental paralysis, or moral despair, he may count himself master of the art of knowing how to abound.

One of the strongest impressions one brings from the life of Jesus is that of a man who, while poor and unfavored by earthly convention or privilege, without money or land or office, with few friends and little popularity, never seems to have missed them, never really to have needed them. He was master of poverty because He knew how to separate Himself from His surroundings. If He had had all things, treasure on earth, a place to lay His

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head, houses or lands or brethren, He would have impressed us with the same sense of His own supremacy, of mastery and knowledge in using His abundance. He knew how to be abased, and to lack, and to suffer, because He knew how to abound, to use privilege, to keep Himself separate from His associations and possessions. We do not feel that anything that He had was necessary to Him nor would have been if He had had all things. There is a wealth of meaning in His saying, "I have overcome the world."



THE REAL MEASURE OF MANHOOD

More than this, in order to know how to escape our riches we must measure ourselves in some other terms than those of the things we have. No man can escape being held and overmastered by his possessions who is known

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by them alone. To say that a man is worth a hundred thousand or a million dollars is to say nothing about any real worth which will last beyond this life. If he is not worth anything else, then his dollars have converted him into their own material substance, and taken all that is valuable out of him. If he is just a master of arts or of literature, and no more—if all his worth to the world is as a dictionary or a treatise, then his studies and his attainments have converted him into an organ of human learning, not made his learning an attribute and a trait of himself. If he is just a good fellow, and that measures all his social standing, he is only a chip on the current of society, not a rill which feeds its tides. The measure of manhood is not in the sum of acquirements, but in the effect of those acquirements. Riches may be taken away; learning may be superseded; fellowship may cease. But the soul which has learned how to use riches,

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which has been enlightened by its knowledge, which has grown loving through earthly popularity—such a soul cannot be deprived of its own; and it may have its value computed in something higher than the things in which it has abounded.



PUTTING OUR ABUNDANCE TO USE

But there is more to this knowledge how to abound than mere self-preservation. It is not enough to keep one's self from being overwhelmed. It were a poor life if one had to be always struggling against his privileges to prevent them from stifling his own better life. Navigation would never have grown up if men's only effort had been to keep themselves afloat on the sea. The sailors want to get somewhere. They build ships to cross seas and carry cargoes. Human strength would be

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a profitless thing if man's only object were to keep himself from losing health. The healthy man wants to use his strength. Vigor of body means power to work. We are not merely to keep ourselves unspotted from the world; we are to do some works of positive usefulness in the world.

Now, in the same terms, what are we to do with our abundance—our wealth, knowledge, comfort, light? We stand amazed at the problem which presents itself to the Carnegies and the Rockefellers of our age, who cannot distribute as fast as they receive, and who are overwhelmed with the problem how to give without bestowing a hurt, and how to have some assurance that their beneficence will not clog the channels of good. But the problem is in some measure the portion of every man who can bestow at all. It costs thought to give even a little help wisely and effectively. Care, prudence, forethought are part of the price he

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must pay who would help his brother. Nobody ever yet was helped out of any other body's abundance by having a dollar thrown at him. Unless a thought and a prayer come with it, it hurts more than it heals. "Blessed is he," says the Word, "who *considereth* the poor."

And what shall we do with our knowledge—our bright young men and women coming out of college and high schools—our cultured men and women? If we hold our acquirements selfishly we cheat the world. If we use culture as a means of indulgence we demoralize society, for the end of knowledge is use. The final object of culture should be to ally one's self to all men, and all men and their interests to one's self. "To do good and to communicate, forget not," said an apostle. If education is going to drive us apart instead of drawing us together, we would better close all our schools. If having all knowledge we have not love, "it profiteth nothing."

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Then, too, what are we to do with the comforts, conveniences, pleasures of life? There is a terrible threat in these luxuries of living to those who have not learned how to abound. If we let them override conscience, paralyze the power of sacrifice, soften the fiber of self-denial, they will unman and unmake us. They have already reared a generation, many of whom are as frankly heathen as any of the ancient peoples or those to whom we send missionaries to-day.



TWO IMPERILED CLASSES

I pray God for light and knowledge to come to two classes of men and women with whom I have grown up and for whose moral welfare I am profoundly concerned. One is that great American people, with its mighty resources, its easy life, its mastery of everything but its own

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abundance. What is to become of us if we do not study how to use the advantage and the power we have? There are sad signs in the heavens. The terrible fight which has to be kept up to hold this nation in the way of justice to the weaker peoples of the earth is an ill portent. If America does not learn how to abound, her enormous advantages will be only a millstone about her neck to sink her in a sea of trouble.

And I am concerned for the future of the men and women who are coming into the largeness and light of such religious knowledge and faith as never was before in the world's history. What are we who have a certain conviction that good is overcoming and God is winning and man is marching on — what are we doing and what are we going to do with that faith? We have a great light, a rich heritage of religious faith. But there is a selfish use of truth which makes it as bad as error in its blight on

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the soul. We used to condemn the men and women who, under the old theology, used their religion as a selfish insurance of their own future safety. It was a mean business to think of religion, the Christian faith, as simply a premium paid for safety from endless burnings. For them the Christian's outlook was no farther than his own personal good; it began and ended with himself. How much better are we who make the larger faith an excuse for indifference, neglect of duty, failure to spread the truth and make sacrifices for it? Have we learned how to abound in our religious freedom? Not unless we have become free and willing distributors of what we have learned to prize, and passed on the treasure which has made us rich. The man who uses his religious faith as a couch for his own complacency, a bed to be spiritually lazy on, is committing slow moral suicide. He is surely forgetting all his higher obligations. The Christian who makes "the unsearchable riches of

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Christ" a private hoard is faithless to his duty as a steward of God's household.

There is a terrible incident in that masterbook of recent fiction, "The Octopus," in which the successful financial operator, at the height of his power, master of great enterprises which he has come to control, goes on board one of the grain ships he owns, as she is loading with the cargo which is to demonstrate his power in the world's market, and as he watches the golden stream of the grain pouring into her hold, the equivalent of enormous riches, the symbol of his power and its source, stumbles and falls into the open hatchway and finds himself struggling for his life with the flood that is pouring from the elevator into the ship. He is mad with fear and the hunger for his life, and fights frantically against the horrible death which impends. But the dust suffocates him, the resistless torrent covers him, his feet get no hold, his cries are not heard, his hands can clutch no firm support, and he is

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buried alive in his own wealth, smothered in his own plenty. I seem to see in that ghastly incident an apologue of what threatens any man, any people, any nation, who having much have not learned how to use that much, who do not know as the apostle did "how to abound."

THE OLD BOOK
AND
THE NEW AGE



THE OLD BOOK AND THE NEW AGE

AN OLD BIBLE

THERE is an old book on my library shelves worth to me more than its weight in gold. It is my mother's Bible. To take it in hand is to set a hundred chords of memory into vibration. To open its pages is to see her face once more, serious in its earnest sincerity, glowing with the light of her strong and placid spirit, as she read to the little ones of her household the words of the sacred volume. I know what that book was to her, how she revered it, loved it, trusted in its teachings, drank in its spirit. Her faith in it trained by a lifetime of regard for it, wholly untouched by the doubts and the questions of a later age, was absolute and unreserved. She

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sought to bring its precepts to bear at every turn of life's experience. She wrought its golden truths into the characters of her children, brought their conduct to its high tests, established them upon its enduring faith.



NEW LIGHT ON THE SCRIPTURES

I have tried many times since then to realize whether that book meant any less to her son than it did to his mother. Many changes have come in the generation which has passed since she was reading that volume. Much has been brought to light which forbids the reading of it to-day in just the lights in which she read it. There is common consent that much has been going on to change our point of view of the Bible. No well-informed man can assume just the attitude toward his Bible that his father and his mother did. But does that mean that it

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means any less to him, that it is less prized, that it brings less light, that it is in any less commanding sense the word of God? It could not be expected that my mother's Bible would outlast a generation or two of active use as to its outward form. The cover has fallen apart, the pages are dingy and worn, the binding is loose. I have been obliged to get me a more modern volume. But the newer volume lies upon my desk; and every day it is opened, read, and handled, and it serves my outward sense as well as my mother's served her. Is the same true of its contents? Is the spiritual word, as it appeals to a young man at the beginning of a new century, shrunken in volume or diminished in authority, to intellect or to conscience, or to the heart of that man? Have the new teachings as to its origin, its composition, the dates of its particular books, their authorship and their aims, dimmed the brightness of the truth which shines from its pages, or weakened the effects of the

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lives there recorded upon our lives, or paralyzed the power of the Holy Spirit which radiates from those pages? Or is the Bible doing its ancient work among men? Is it still the bearer of a divine message, the record of the revelations of God to man, the story of the grace of God enshrined in a living soul? For one, I believe that the Bible has not lost, for an hour, its old place in the affections or the faith of men. The young man may still hold it as the torch of his path, the interpretation of his life, the message of God to his soul.



NEW THEORIES HAVE NOT CHANGED THE BOOK

Stop a moment, and think how many different theories about the sun have held a place in man's belief during the past two thousand years. First it was a disk of fire, hung in the firmament to give light to the earth by day. Then it was

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regarded as a satellite of the earth, a sphere, indeed, but revolving in an orbit about our world. Finally, modern science has fixed for all time certain facts in regard to it — that it is a molten globe, millions of times as large as the earth, about which the earth itself revolves as a satellite, composed of chemic elements in combustion similar to those which form our planet. And there are all the wonderful details about its corona, and its photo-sphere, and the awful rents therein, called “sun-spots.” These theories have been so violently opposed to one another that it would seem as if they could never have applied to one unchanging object. But not all these changes in theory, not all the results of research, not all the altered concept of this mighty fact in our daily lives, have in the least degree altered its relation to us, nor ours to it. It has gone right on, shining and turning, lighting and warming the earth, ripening the harvests, drawing water for the clouds, and fulfilling its

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functions as the bringer of vitality and fruitfulness to earth.

So of the Bible. Not any nor all the theories about it have altered its beneficent power, its saving health, its divine inspiration to the heart of man. The youth need never be dismayed because the theories change about the Book. You cannot change the character of a great force by changing its name or the account of its origin and organization. Theory is only the outward name and account we give of things. Behind it is the reality, the thing itself, and that outlasts all theories.



THE RIGHT TO INVESTIGATE THE BIBLE

It is for this reason that the young man to-day need have no fear whatever of examining the serious teachings of his age, and even its speculations in regard to the nature of his Bible.

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We have the same right that men always have had to investigate its credentials and prove its real nature.

You and I are asked to build our lives and our characters for this life and for all life upon the Bible and its message. In proportion to the importance of the issues at stake, are we not bound the more scrupulously to assure ourselves that we are building upon assumptions to which we have a good right and title, which cannot be wrested from us? I take it that this is what modern criticism means, about which so many are worried and fearful. It is simply the effort of honest scholars to "search the title" of the Bible to our honor, our attention, and our faith. It is no more destructive than my letter opener, by means of which I get at the contents of the envelope which encloses my friend's message; no more hostile to truth than the telescope which the astronomer turns upon the stars to find their real substance and

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characteristics. It is certainly a significant and very reassuring fact that the many Christians who have dared to follow the modern students and critics, whatever they may have given up, are still using their Bibles just as they were used of old, for the same purposes that Paul laid down in his letter to Timothy, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." No reason has been given why the Christian man should not continue to use his Bible as his spiritual forbears did, as a record of God's revelation of Himself to man, as the great library of religious truth and inspiration, as the depository of eternal truths, given through Jesus and His gospel, which the lowliest spirits may understand, and

"Whence wisest sages may be taught

And wisdom's self become more wise."

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WE NEED A REVIVAL OF BIBLE READING

With this assurance in his mind, the young man ought to take his Bible from the shelf, dust its covers, and open its pages. Unquestionably we are letting modern conditions crowd us from our Bibles. We are trusting too much to the spirit and essence of the Bible which filters through other minds into our books and our current literature. That ought never to suffice for the Christian. It is his duty to go back to his original documents. He, above all others, should appreciate through first hand knowledge the treasures outlined in his Bible. I look to see a great revival of study and knowledge of the Bible. It is not always destined to be thrust aside by the importunate newspaper and the surfeit of current publications. A generation ago all the folk then in America who had any old-fashioned furniture, any ancestral china, and plate, and glass were in

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the habit of stowing it away in garrets and cupboards and other places of hiding, while they bought new and inferior things, fresh from the machine shops and the great stores. To-day these same people are ransacking their own and other people's premises to discover these same old-fashioned belongings, which they are bringing out of their retirement, and setting in the places of honor, in parlor and in dining room. That is what wiser times and wiser people will do for the Bible! They will reclaim it from its exile and retirement and bring it back to the most conspicuous places in daily life.



LOOKING AT LIFE FROM THE BIBLE POINT OF VIEW

It is through such a use of his Bible that the young man of to-day will acquire that habit which his fathers had, of looking at life from

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the standpoint of the Bible men and women. It will not be enough for us that we take our Bible as a medicine; we need it as a food. We must not be content to admit it into our lives as invalids cautiously let a little fresh air into their sick rooms. We must immerse ourselves in its truths, in its spirit, in its ideals and motives, as men go forth into the open air and take it as their daily food, the absolute sustenance of their bodies. That is the way to get the Bible thoroughly into one's self. The ideas which we constantly imbibe, by and by come wholly to possess us. We fall victims to the bad thoughts. We are saved by the good. If we are to make the Bible the power of God in our souls we must be continually imbibing it day by day, bringing our minds into the refreshing and vigorous atmosphere of its pages. Let us use our Bibles as a continual education. Let us live in the spiritual society of Isaiah and Hosea and Paul and John. Let us be daily

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in touch with the ideals set forth in the Psalms, in the Sermon on the Mount, in the Lord's parables. Let us walk every day in the footsteps of Jesus, giving heed to His words, and ever renewing our efforts to understand His spirit. Is there any more certain way of preventing religious atrophy, of keeping the soul fresh, alert and growing in grace, than this association with the men who were full of the spirit and of power, this daily walk with Christ?



THE BIBLE PRESENTS ETERNAL PRINCIPLES

Intimacy and familiarity with the Bible will be the means of helping us to keep in mind the eternal principles of life. That is the same thing as keeping in mind the laws of God. His law is the eternal nature of things, and that is what most men are the quickest to forget. The constant and unchang-

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ing things, the surest things to get in our way and overthrow us if we forget them, are these unvarying principles of the moral world, or the eternal law of the Lord. We attend to a host of things which have no permanent or lasting relation to our life. These, which will always affect us, we ignore. Precisely for that reason I plead for a freer and a more constant use of the Bible. If it comes to a choice between the newspaper and the Bible, you can better afford to do without your journal than without your Psalms and your gospels. The newspaper tells of the happenings of the day; the Bible tells of the principles which are true for every day that was and is and is to be. Elizabeth Harrison once asked a fashionable woman to join her classes of kindergartners, taking their studies in Dante or in Shakspeare. "I have not the time" was the reply; "I am too interested in the subjects of the day to take up the studies of yesterday." The answer

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was profound and searching. "I ask you to come and study the truths of yesterday and to-day and forever." That is the greatest motive for the study of the Bible. That book offsets the great error of our time. Our blunder is to exaggerate the value of to-day, and the things of to-day. But what would they all be without yesterday? Or what are they worth without to-morrow? The only topics of the times are the themes of eternity. Take care of the eternities and the times will take care of themselves. If you would keep up with the times, you must reach far beyond them in your thoughts and ideals.



THE DOGMATIST MISSES THE SPIRIT OF THE BIBLE

Now a man does not get thus saturated and filled with the spirit of his Bible by merely reading it through, nor even by working it into a con-

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cordance so as to know all the texts on any given subject between its lids. He may do all this with a mind so shut up in prejudice, in passion, or in pettiness, that his readings will bring him no enlargement, his studies no uplift. You may ride abroad in the freshest air that ever swept down from the upper zones of the atmosphere, and if you travel in a closed carriage you will get nothing but the smell of upholstery and the reek of the stables. If you want the good of the northwest wind you must ride with lowered windows, or in an open wagon. There is no book, no collection of books in the world, which calls for a larger-mindedness, for a more hospitable heart than the Bible. If you go through it after the fashion of the narrow churchman, the mere sectarian, the dogmatist, and the bigot, you will never imbibe its noblest truths nor feel its real spirit. But open your heart by prayer, broaden it by love, deepen it by faith, and as your capacity grows the Bible will mean, not less, but more to you.

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THE BIBLE INTENSELY MODERN

This brings us face to face with one great reason why the world has not derived more benefit from the Bible. It is not because men have outgrown it that they turn from it. The true reason is that they have not grown up to it. It is not an old-fashioned book! It is the newest, freshest, most up-to-date; no writings in this world are so intensely and uncompromisingly modern. Far from being a book whose teachings are obsolete, effete, antiquated, the most casual comparison of its ideals and those of modern days shows that we are centuries away from even a fair realization of the principles and the forces which it exalts, the mighty truths it teaches. The gospel doctrine of love still anticipates the actual practice of mankind by long centuries. The message which Christ bore to man, of a Father's forgiveness, a mercy ample to cover every repented sin — does not the sin-sick

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soul still crave just that assurance for its peace and joy? His good tidings of immortality, too, are none other than the straining ears of millions are awaiting, to give them quiet and assurance in death. What inspiration for the battles of life could be more thrilling than the promised victory of good, the triumph of God, which shall include the reconciliation and the loyalty of them that have been His foes? To the plaint of the poor; to the threat of the vicious; to the need of the ignorant; to the statesmanship seeking wise policies; to the spirit of reform alert for correctives; to the plain, average man, groping, anxious, unsatisfied, the Bible holds out its supreme morality, its transcendent motives, its quickening faith. When society gets within hailing distance of them, the millennium will be well in sight!

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THREE TESTS OF THE BOOK

There are three life experiences in which the youth may test his Bible, which bring out its power and its glory in mightier proofs than any framed by the apologists or the scholars. When he falls under the spell of temptation, and the mighty admonitions of its sacred pages ring again in his ears, he feels the righteous persuasions of the very spirit of God moving his soul. "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found," "The wages of sin is death." What a host of helpful powers rally around the wavering will at the sound of those faithful monitions! And when sorrow comes, what words are such comfort-bringers or help so mightily? "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth," "I will both trust in the Lord and wait patiently for him!" In the supreme crisis of the soul, when it is losing its hold on things

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earthly, when the eyes grow dim and the strength of human comfort fails, how close they come to the heart. How many have been sustained and borne triumphantly through the mystery by these blessed utterances, "For this mortal must put on immortality," "Death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed," "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying nor pain."

In the light or in the dark, these voices of the spirit are the pledge of peace and victory to the Christian's heart. Happy is he who hears and trusts them!

DOES IT PAY
TO THINK?



DOES IT PAY TO THINK?

A COMMON QUESTION

A THOUGHTFUL friend of mine writes me thus: "Does thinking pay? All roads lead to Rome do they not? The man with faith gets there sooner than the man who thinks, however, and the way of the former is easier than the way of the latter. Indeed, many on the latter road get lost in the mazes of the woods through which their path leads them. On the principle of economy of effort and of the greatest good to the greatest number, is not the doctrine (rather discredited nowadays) that you are to believe because it is written the sensible one to teach." That utterance I suppose fairly voices a widespread sentiment. There are many who like my friend assume an antagonism between thinking

and believing. They assume that there can be faith without thought. They assume that the tranquillity of blind assent is better than the unrest of inquiry. They assume that to believe is more acceptable to God than to reason. Our question is, are they right? Are faith and reason hostile attitudes of mind? Is tranquil assent better than honest search for truth? Is a believer necessarily better, in God's sight, than an unbeliever? Has the world benefited or lost by men's thinking on the great themes of life and of religion. These are very common problems to-day. They are raised in some very keen and intelligent minds. They would seem to indicate a very prevalent temper. It may be that they are the symptoms of a reaction from the skeptical spirit which has characterized a whole generation of thoughtful youth. It may be that after the period of free inquiry, of speculation, of unsettling and of readjustment of men's ideas in the light of the new knowledge, there are some

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who have grown so weary of the seemingly endless debate, that they are ready to turn in any direction for relief, and accept any voice that lifts itself up as authoritative. There are some strange new popes in the world to-day, and the Roman Catholic is not the only one who submits his mind to what he counts as an authority, and tries to induce reason to abdicate in favor of what he calls faith.



WHY DO WE BELIEVE?

The first thing to be settled is whether there is any necessary or inherent antagonism between faith and reason. To answer that question we have only to ask another. How does anybody acquire faith except by reason, by the exercise of the intellectual powers, by thinking? How can you and I reach a belief in any truth except by pondering what seems to us the evidences for

it? Is it possible to conceive of a belief which does not rest on thought? Can anybody be a believer except a thinking creature? Can you have faith without a mind?

The fact is, faith is simply the result of an exercise of the intellect. We believe because of certain ideas which have commended themselves to our intellects, to reason. The Catholic has faith in the Pope because he thinks the chain of reasoning sufficient which gives the authority over souls into his hands. Mr. Moody believed the Bible infallible; if you asked him why, he must give you a reason, an argument, a thought — always making the same appeal to the intellect. Faith is the act of supremest reasonableness of which man is capable. You will see this the more clearly if you remember Lord Francis Bacon's foolish remark, "The more incredible anything is, the more honor I do God in believing it." This, as Dr. Momerie has shown, is equivalent to saying that the more impossible of belief

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a thing is, the more we honor God by believing it. "So that to believe what cannot be believed at all would be the acme of religious achievement." Reason in its highest exercise is the basis on which we rest our faith. Thought is the way we reach faith. So it is clear there can be no hostility possible between them.



THINKING IS THE PROCESS OF REACHING TRUTH

Consider, still further, what thinking is; it is the search for truth, the means by which we reach reality. And there is nothing short of reality in which we have any right to believe. But it is only by thinking, hard, serious, honest thinking, that the mind becomes prepared to hold the truth. You can hold your belief in the rotundity of the earth only by virtue of the thinking you have been doing since childhood, which has made your mental faculties capable of holding that concep-

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tion. Your faith in the goodness of God could not be maintained for an instant, except on the data your thinking in reference to life and the creation has been furnishing you. Thought is the training of the mind for belief. Reason is the root of religion. Thinking must pay, if for no other reason, because it is the apprenticeship to faith.



FAITH RESTS ON SOMEBODY'S THINKING

Moreover, if your faith does not rest on your own thinking, it must rest on somebody's else. The blindest believer by authority simply consents to let somebody else do the thinking, while he accepts its results. But there never was a truth offered to the human understanding which did not imply the thinking of some soul, to attain and to formulate it. All doctrine or teaching is simply truth thought out by the human

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mind. A man may say he believes because his faith is written in the Bible. But then he only means that he believes what he or somebody else thinks the Bible teaches; and he believes the Bible to have authority probably because he accepts the traditional view of the Bible; and that is a view which has been reached simply by the thinking which men have done with reference to its contents. We say that we believe the truth of the gospel on the authority of Jesus Christ; but what really lies behind that simple act of faith is the thinking which the ages have been doing concerning the person, the claims, the words, and the works of Jesus of Nazareth. It is easy to be carried to the point of faith by the momentum of other men's thinking. But somewhere along the line somebody has had to stop and think, somebody has been challenged by the stupendous fact of that unapproachable life, and has thought his way to the firm standing of belief. And every man

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is liable to be called upon for that same procedure if he chances to be dislodged from the tranquillity of faith at the second remove and forced to realize that no other man's thinking will answer, at last, but one's own grapple with the great realities and facts of the spiritual life.



DOUBT OFTEN FAITH IN THE MAKING

But if these things be true, then it follows that much thinking which we might, in our haste, call doubting, is really incipient believing, faith in formation. No man can doubt that some thinking, some doubting, if you will, is heaven-inspired. When Peter began to think about the relations of his old Jewish faith, and to doubt whether his exclusiveness was a final attitude of mind, was he not on his way to the faith in a universal gospel which raised him to a higher

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belief, and made him a better believer? When the Gentiles who yielded to the persuasive preaching of Peter and Paul began to doubt the truths of their old notions about the gods and their worship, were they not moving on to a higher faith? Is not much of what the church is calling to-day "infidelity," and "unbelief" and "skepticism," merely the doubt of old errors, of unreasonable traditions, of incredible doctrines, and the prelude to a better faith in God and man and Christ and the Bible? When reasonable and loving men in the church began to doubt whether a good God would predestinate to damnation any of his own offspring, was the church full of "infidels," "skeptics," "doubters"? To be sure that was what shallow folks declared; but most men admit to-day that these doubts were only the rejection of a horrible untruth, and the prelude a deeper, grander faith in the Divine Fatherhood. Dr. Holmes once said that faith always involves the disbelief of some lesser fact

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in favor of a greater. That was what Tennyson meant when he wrote

“There dwells more faith in human doubt
Believe me, than in half the creeds.”



OUR DEBT TO THE DOUBTERS

This would be a poor world to-day in religious life and faith if it had not been for the men and women who have dared to doubt ; who have denied old lies only that they might affirm new truths ; who have disbelieved a little that they might have faith in very much. We should have to give up the tremendous inspiration of Abraham's example, who dared to doubt the very love of his father-heart and the covenant of God and offer up Isaac, in witness of a growing faith. We must give up Moses who dared to doubt the value of all Egypt's fair persuasions, as his faith

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took deeper hold of "that which is invisible." We must part with Paul and all his glorious legacy to the world, who came into the larger faith through doubts of those things he "had counted gain." We must give up William Tyndale, who was called "heretic" because he tried to open the Bible for Englishmen to read. We must lose Oliver Cromwell and his splendid doubts of the rights of an English Church over the consciences of men. We must lose Channing whose doubts of the doctrine of man's inherent depravity led America to a deeper faith in human nature. We must lose Murray and Ballou with their noble and christian doubts about the endlessness of evil and the unfatherliness of God, who guided us all out upon the table-lands of the larger faith in God's Infinite Love. Could we afford to beggar ourselves of all these great souls? Yet every one of them has been a heretic in his time to some old falsehood, in order that he might be loyal to some new truths. And could we keep the Master

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himself, who taught men to doubt the sayings of scribe and Pharisee, to forsake the old conventional interpretations, and shocked his Jewish neighbors by his bold words, "But I say unto you."



TRANQUILLITY NOT THE SUPREME GOOD

Does not Jesus, moreover, teach us a better thought than this fear of my friend's, when he says, "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword"? We are not here to seek the tranquillity of a state of mind which stagnates in old misbeliefs. The real life of a man must be a life of unrest, of surprises, of shocks, and confusion to the mind. As faith broadens, the soul sees continually new aspects of truth which must of necessity cost it new efforts to understand and to master. But this very exercise of the soul is its own most wholesome life. Think-

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ing is the training, the exercise of the mind preparing itself for faith, nay, enjoying its highest estate. "Does it pay to think?" is equivalent to asking does it pay to live. Cease thinking and you cease to be a soul. "I think," said Des Cartes, "therefore I am." To refuse to think as hard and as long as is necessary for the attainment of faith, is to make the protest of indolence, or faintheartedness, or timidity. It is like the hesitancy of the man whose physician orders him to walk, to climb, to ride, or row for health's good sake.



THE HELMET OF DON QUIXOTE

When Don Quixote was preparing for his knightly quest he made himself a helmet, and when it was done he smote it with his sword to test its strength. The blow crushed it, and he had to begin again. This time, when his

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work was done, he did not test it. He persuaded himself that it was strong enough, to make a second trial needless. His faith in his own work was not strong enough to give him the courage to test it. So there is danger when a man is afraid to test his own belief by the sword of reason. He has but small faith in his own faith who cannot bring himself to put it to the proof of his own and other men's honest thinking. Let him not be timid. If his faith break at a blow, it was not a sound, strong faith. It needed to be made anew. It was better that he should go to work again. It is hard to have to toil and labor at our faith. But faith, like salvation — as an element of salvation — is a thing we must work out with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in us.

“What we have won with pain we hold more fast.

What tarrieth long is sweeter at the last;

Be thou content.”

FAITH AND ITS
FUNCTION



FAITH AND ITS FUNCTION

WE BELIEVE MORE THAN WE KNOW

WE all of us believe far more than we can ever know. The business of this world is carried on not by knowledge, but by belief. We walk not by sight, but by faith. For it takes but a very little thinking and inquiry to bring us to the limit of knowledge, to the point where knowing ends and believing begins. We are able to catalogue a few facts and to utilize a few forces. But when we try to get behind either facts or forces, to deal with the realities beyond them, we find ourselves baffled and beaten.

We know, for example, how electricity will act under certain conditions; but what do we know of its real nature? We have been handling things material all our days, but who will pretend that

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we know anything about the real nature of matter? Lord Kelvin lately said, with evident sense of impotence in the face of great facts, "My whole career is a record of failure; I know no more about electricity or gravitation than I did when I began as a student." How much do we know about that which we ought to know best — ourselves? Did you ever stop long enough or think hard enough to ask yourself, "What am I?" And did you ever find out? If we are thus baffled in trying to understand our own nature and being, how much more do we become helpless in the presence of the infinite life? "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" We are no nearer to an affirmative answer to this question than when it was written. To comprehend God is the great impossibility.

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MOST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE IS TAKEN SECOND-HAND

The story is told that an English skeptic once declared that he would believe nothing that he did not know. "Then, sir," was the witty response of one who heard him, "you will have the shortest creed of any man in England." That retort embodies a truth commonly ignored in the estimates people make of knowledge and of faith; for what we know, absolutely and by demonstration, is the merest fragment of what we believe. Nine-tenths of the things we accept most implicitly, we take on trust, on the testimony of other men, on the strength of general principles, on second-hand evidence. Very few of us have ever seen a human body dissected; but all of us who have not seen this process nevertheless believe that the organs and muscles and nerves reported by others exist in the shape described in the anatomies. When we enter a railway train, it is probably without the slightest knowledge of the

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man who drives the engine, or of any of the train-hands, or of the track-gangs, or switchmen, or signalmen. Yet we believe so fully in their competency, that they are reliable and qualified for their posts, that we trust our lives in their keeping. Any examination of our knowledge, as we call it, shows the same characteristic running through it all. The greater part of it is simply belief, acceptance as fact or truth of what we have not verified for ourselves, and what we have no means of verifying.



THE RELATION OF FAITH TO KNOWLEDGE

But while very much of what we call knowledge rests on faith, it is nevertheless true that what we call faith always has a basis in knowledge, and could not exist except on such a foundation. Consider, for instance, how many of the simplest acts of life are acts of faith, and yet how that

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faith is justified by man's large and well-established knowledge. When you drop a letter into the post office, and release yourself from all further care about it, you perform an act of faith. You trust in the officials of government, and in the arrangements they will make for the transfer and delivery of your mail. That trust is based upon a knowledge of thousands of similar cases, in which letters have been duly delivered, and upon a broad knowledge that as a rule men can be depended on to perform what they engage to do. Thus there is no hostility between faith and knowledge, but they have a reciprocal influence on each other. And faith is the advance of the mind from a basis in facts to what transcends knowledge yet which is not beyond the bounds of reason.

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WE ACT ON THE HIGHEST PROBABILITIES

So it will appear that we really know, know fully and finally, that is, comprehend, really but very little about the world we live in. And if we were to analyze our commonest ideas about ourselves and the creation, we should find ourselves unable to demonstrate, that is, to prove absolutely, more than a very small fraction of what we accept for true about them all. Yet we proceed in life, we govern and conduct ourselves as if we knew. We take very much for granted. We assume a great deal that we cannot prove. Nor do we seem in doing this to do anything unreasonable. We go by probabilities. We act on what we deem reasonable, even if it is not demonstrable. We cannot completely solve these great problems. So we take the view of them which seems reasonable. And that is what we mean by faith. Faith is trust in the reasonableness of the universe. It is a belief in

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the reliability of reason. It is confidence in ourselves, in God as real, as reasonable, as worthy of credence. Faith is a conviction about the nature of things upon which we are willing to act. No man can prove that what his eye sees really exists; yet it is far more reasonable to believe that it does than to disbelieve it. No one of us can demonstrate that seed time and harvest will not fail this year; yet the farmers will plant and till and prepare for the gathering of the crop. No man can demonstrate that God cares for us and loves us; yet because that seems the most reasonable conception of life and its relation to the source of life, we accept and believe it. This is what we mean in its broadest sense by faith.

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FAITH THE SUPREME ACT OF REASON

These thoughts prepare us to believe that faith is the supreme act of reason. It is the supreme and solemn self-confidence of reason. For by faith reason assumes the validity of its own insight. By faith reason forecasts what it cannot prove. By faith reason acts upon its own judgment and takes for granted that the universe is not a monstrous fraud upon itself. So reason leads up to faith, is crowned and glorified by faith. So faith becomes the most thoroughly characteristic act of the sons of God. For by faith we show that we believe in our power to understand our Father in the heavens.

This view of faith makes it, for one thing, the highest act of trust in ourselves, in our own souls. For through faith we believe in what we cannot know, except through these senses and the consciousness to which they report. When I trust my eyesight, I believe in the correspondence of

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my idea of what I see to something real about that object. I have faith in the harmony between my mind and the signs and tokens of the external world. When Columbus studied the problem of a western world and made his brave voyage he did so resting in a faith in the trustworthiness of his own faculties and his own judgment, as well as of all the evidences which appealed to him. So when you and I believe in a "city that hath foundation," in the "many mansions" of the Father's house, we simply trust the yearnings and the reasonings of our own natures. It is more reasonable to believe in immortality than to doubt it. Faith steps forward where knowledge cannot go, and sustains the soul until it shall be able to see "face to face."

Then, again, faith is the highest act of confidence in the trustworthiness of the universe. We could not have any faith if we were not convinced that this is a world grounded in divine reason unfolded out of the divine thought, which will not

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mock our honest effort to understand it. When the reformer sets out to remove the abuses and wrongs of human life, he does so because of his sublime trust in the supreme moral forces of the universe, and that they are moving toward righteousness. When we are striving to bring in an era of peace among nations, we do so in faith that the great forces of social life are moving men to see the folly and the sinfulness of international strife. And it is this that holds us against all the bluster and brag of jingo statesmen and all the resentment of a reluctant public, to the conviction that this great and righteous principle will one day prevail. It is faith in the moral order as the real order, the moral law as the real law, which helps us to these great struggles and glorious triumphs of the better cause.

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FAITH IS CONFIDENCE IN God AND THE UNIVERSE

Because of these things faith is an act of confidence in the reasonableness of God, in the wisdom of the infinite. "The fear" — that is, the reverence — "of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," says the proverb. So we may declare that the wisdom of the Lord is the beginning of reverence. We revere the Most High because our reason rests in his reasonableness; because we see the tokens that His creation is wrought out in thoughtfulness and in intelligence. We could not revere an irrational God. We reverence Him because he stands to us for the highest thought. But all this pre-supposes some knowledge, some apprehension of God. Faith is not exercised in ignorance, total and unqualified, any more than the bird can fly in a total vacuum. Trust is inconceivable without some knowledge. Out of the little we know of God we feel warranted

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in trusting in Him, having faith concerning the things in which we can have no knowledge.



FAITH THE BASIS OF CONDUCT

But faith is not an estate that is final. It is, indeed, the culmination of reason. But it does not end in itself. It has its own culmination in action. "Faith without works is dead." Faith is a conviction on which we are willing to act. It goes deeper than the intellect, it touches the feelings and through them moves the will. It is confidence which manifests itself in conduct. That is always the finest faith which does not rest in mere theory, but goes on to practice; which hazards actual well-being on its forecasts and its intimations. The ship-builder shows a certain kind of faith, when he constructs a vessel which he says will stand the brunt of the waves, and the drive of the gales, and make her way to

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port. But that is a finer faith which is in the heart of the vessel's master, when he takes that ship from the builder's hands and trusts his own life on her decks, and his own treasures in her hold, and weighs her anchor. So all real and vital faith has its issue in action. We get our motives for what we do from the things we believe; and no man believes very strongly in any matter unless he is willing and ready to act upon his belief.



FAITH THE PRELUDE TO MORE KNOWLEDGE

Further yet, faith is the prelude and the preparation for knowledge. "We walk by faith and not by sight." True, but walking by faith is the way we learn to walk by sight. The architect works by faith when he dreams out the possible St. Peter's. The seaman steers by compass across the Atlantic, navigating by faith

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in the needle and the electric currents, before he sails at last by sight of Fire Island light-ship and Sandy Hook and the buoys of the ship channel in New York harbor. Lieutenant Peary walked by faith across the great ice plain of Greenland, before he traversed it by sight. So we go from faith to sight in things spiritual. By faith in love as the real and eternal rule and principle of life, we live in love, until at last we know that love is all we believed it to be. By faith in the right we do the right, and learn by experience, that is, by sight, that right is the everlasting foundation of peace and joy. By faith in the soul, in the reality of our own spiritual nature, we walk in the spirit until we grow to feel and to know that the spirit is the most real thing in the creation, till we are prepared to see the mighty purport of Jesus' saying, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Thus we go from knowledge to faith and then from faith to larger knowledge. And then, if

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always we act upon our faith, and carry it into works, and realize it in conduct, we go from that new knowledge to a larger faith and then to grander works, and so to greater knowledge still. The circles of life widen about the soul in amazing and overwhelming magnitudes. Faith, reasonable faith, faith which roots itself in knowledge—this is the key to infinite life, the eternal privilege and joy of the spirit of man. Only let it be remembered that to keep itself alive, it must always approve itself as a faith which acts, a faith of deeds and conduct, of experience. In such a faith we come to have “eternal life.”

MEN, WOMEN,
AND CHURCHES



MEN, WOMEN, AND CHURCHES

NO SEX IN RELIGION

THE gospel of Jesus Christ was and is addressed to the whole human race. It is therefore addressed equally to men and women. There is a deeper law than the law of sex. It is the law of our common humanity. We are all children of God, human souls, born of common conditions, having common experiences, destined to a common future. So there is no special gospel for men as apart from women. We are all one in the sight of God.

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WHY SPEAK TO MEN AS A CLASS

For that very reason it sometimes seems desirable to speak to men as a class. Because the tendencies of an age may draw men into special ways of life, which are not consistent with the common ideal. To prevent the division of the race into classes, it is sometimes needful to treat separately the classes into which it tends to divide. When one side of the body is weaker than the other, we treat that side to exercise. When one part of the class at school falls behind, we drill that part by itself. That is the motive for this particular chapter. I would speak to men especially, because the impression is abroad that men are not so attentive to religious and moral affairs as they ought to be. If that is true, it is a false and perilous state of affairs. There is no more vital concern of human beings than that which relates to the life of their souls. It is a matter which

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belongs to men as much as to women, to women as much as to men. So that if either kind of human beings is leaving the things which relate to their common higher life to the other class, there is danger ahead to both; and those who see that danger ought to speak out.

On this premise I do not wish to dogmatize. I do not believe that rash statements or opinions are at all useful. I only wish to bring to notice some matters which appear to be significant, and to ask you to make your own inferences. I ask my readers to be the grand jury, while I lay certain facts before you; then you young men who read shall decide for yourselves whether there is material enough to make out a case against men in general of neglect of duty in relation to the world's higher life

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THE CASE AGAINST THE MEN

There are certainly some facts which warrant the raising of such a question. Attentive observers of the times note some curious tendencies. They go into churches and see two or three times as many women as men. They go into the schools and find the women in charge of the education of children outnumbering the men ten to one. They come back from the philanthropic field to report a tremendous majority of women at work in the world's charities, raising moneys, overseeing institutions, having charge of committees, doing the real work. It is startling to see the same characteristics in that great field covered by the clubs of our modern life. When men form clubs, it is usually either for politics or for pleasure. It is probable that a large proportion of the women's clubs have as an end some ethical or intellectual purpose. I could name

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a half-dozen clubs of women in my immediate circle which are making a serious study of literature, of social conditions, of education, of the higher themes which interest intelligent classes; I should not find it easy to name the same number of clubs with similar aims made up of men. The interest—and for that matter the ability, too—of women in the higher education is worrying educators who have noted the rapid push of women to the fore. In some of the co-educational colleges there is great alarm because women are coming in such numbers and are taking such high rank. At Harvard even the proximity of Radcliffe as an “annex” is viewed with alarm, and a well-known professor has raised the cry that Radcliffe is leading to the “feminization” of the university faculty, that is, to the lowering of the standards of teaching to adapt it to the female mind. But in my own college the trouble seems to be the other way; for in a recent

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year of all the candidates for Phi Beta Kappa, there was only one man among seven or eight women. I know, to touch another field, of a good many "mothers' clubs" in many cities. I think I have yet to hear of a "fathers' club." Indeed, a prominent New York educator, wishing to reach the fathers, talked not long ago to the New York County Mothers' Club on "A father's duty to his children;" and one of his most pointed statements was to the effect that to-day the father scarcely is a father at all. He is a bread-winner, money-getter, office-holder, business-man, trolley-car-passenger, club-man, newspaper-reader; but he is charged with scarcely knowing his children, with spending little time with them, sometimes with knowing them only by gaslight and Sunday sunlight.

Now I do not bring up these matters as proving anything against men. I am not to draw any inferences from them. That is

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for you to do. They certainly do represent a state of things which many people are observing. I have questioned many witnesses, from many walks in life, both men and women, concerning this tendency, and they all agree that there is such a drift. It may be men are not to blame for it. It may be their misfortune. It may be that it is the result of modern conditions. It may mean a permanent change in affairs.



NEED OF MEN'S INFLUENCE IN RELIGION

But, clearly, if such a condition prevails, it is something calling for your action and mine. If men are suffering themselves to be superseded in their interest and care for the higher mental and moral life, it is time to call a halt. It is unfair to leave the burden of interest and care for these things to women, both out of regard for

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them, and out of regard for the interest of society. This is a man's world as well as a woman's. Women cannot manage it alone, any more than men can. The partnership holds in all respects—in duties, privileges, gains and losses. You cannot afford to surround your families with religious influences which are created and conditioned purely by women. You ought not to be willing to have your children educated under purely or largely feminine influence. If the conditions I have hinted at are real they ought to be changed.

Especially is this true of the church and its particular interest—the Christian religion. It is an unwholesome state of affairs when a critic can fairly speak, as one did recently, of “women's activities and men's inactivities in the church.” The Father's business is a business that requires men's attention. “To seek and to save that which is lost” is a man's care as well as a woman's. How can a minister “preach

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the word " in all its bearings and relations if he preaches it mainly to women? How can the Sunday school rear your children, girls or boys, in an all-around "nurture and admonition of the Lord," if it has to be planned and carried on without the influence and thought and personal presence of men? It is not enough for men to join the "reform clubs" of society. That is too late an appearance on the scene. Horace Mann used to say that where there is life "one former is worth a thousand reformers." Your Sunday schools are the "forming clubs" of the church, and of all our modern life. Is it not a wise economy to be in at the forming of moral and religious ideals rather than to wait and have to reform them?

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MEN'S INFLUENCE ON THE PULPIT

I have alluded to the influence of these things upon the minister himself, who necessarily, in Protestant churches, is so large a factor in the religious temper and environment. Let me speak delicately and reverently. The minister who does not recognize his debt to the religious life of womanhood is an ingrate and a Pharisee. From our mother's knees, we who preach the word are debtors beyond the power of words to tell, to the Christian life of womanhood. It guided our childhood; it sanctified our manhood. It has refined, chastened, inspired us all. But there is a man's view of religion as well as a woman's. There is a man's moral character as well as a woman's. He who said, "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men," said also, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." A minister needs to have his character formed and corrected

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by the vigor of men, as well as by the refinement of women. He needs the sturdy companionship of his brothers. He should feel the demand and the cravings of the souls of strong men. He needs to be trained by the aggressiveness of men as well as the receptiveness of women. I once knew a church which had long been under the ministry of a man of gentle, over-refined nature, and when he went away the church chose as its minister a man rugged to the point of coarseness, blunt, raw, and emphatic. And a man in the church accounted for the violent contrast by saying that the people had had "a long course of sermons on roses and posies, and now it would do them good to hear about noses and toeses." But in a church where the masculine influence was strong and constant there could be no such one-sided preaching. A healthy balance would be kept, and the minister would be trained to speak a message in which strength should blend with gentleness, and force go hand in hand

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with love. Any minister insensibly adapts his preaching to the people whom he talks to ; else he is no true preacher. He cannot long remain an all-round preacher, if he preach wholly to men or wholly to women. So that men are really responsible through their presence in or absence from the churches, for the kind of religion and the sort of theology which emanates from the pulpit.



MEN ARE CRIPPLING THE CHURCHES

Now no man would contemplate with composure the possibility of the closing or the serious crippling of the churches in the community in which he lives. You are sensible of the vast difference it makes in every human interest from high to low, whether there is a wholesome religious force going out from the church. Your home is not safe, nor is the house

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which shelters it, without the life generated in the churches. That was a pertinent question which Horace Bushnell put to business men when he asked them what they supposed real estate was worth in Sodom! It is equally pertinent to ask any father how he would like to bring up his family in Gomorrah. Cancel the religious influences which go out from the churches of your town, eliminate the moral life which they sustain, and the exodus from the place would be as certain as if the plague were to break out within its borders.

But every man contributes, as far as his influence goes, to make a Sodom of his city, when he withholds his support from the great moral and religious safeguard of the community. Even if he succeed in keeping his own life pure, kindly and just, he lends no help to make other men and women, the dangerous classes who sway between good and ill, any better, any truer, any kindlier.

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So far as he is concerned, the work for the world's redemption will stop, will get no more aid, will lag and languish. "He that is not for us is against us," said the Master. "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."



THE EFFECT ON MEN THEMSELVES

But I ask it of you on higher ground. I hate that presentation of duty which bases it upon the use it is going to be to somebody else. Fathers are exhorted to be good, so as to set an example to their sons. They are coaxed into church-going because it will give them social standing. They are invited to be pure because that will make them healthy. Now I do not question the soundness of all these motives. But they do not come anywhere near the real, and vital reason why a man

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should be religious or why he should be moral. There is a higher reason, and that is the one I would make the most urgent and impressive. I ask your interest, your personal care, your love and your loyalty to the church of Jesus Christ, to its services and to its works of love, of charity, and of salvation, because these things will bring you into touch with the life and the spirit of Jesus Christ himself; and that is the highest good of any one of us. I would have men come to the churches not simply because the churches will help some third party, but because these centers of religion will help them. Is there anything better for a man in our life than to be brought, once in seven days, by service, by ritual, prayer, song, and sermon, into close and tender relations with the life of Jesus Christ; to have glimpses of that countenance, white and radiant with the light

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that never was on land or sea; to hear those words which set our spirits on fire with moral enthusiasm and love of the highest and best; to catch something of the glory of the sublime and transforming truths He uttered, to which our hearts give answer, as deep calling unto deep? Is not that what you need to make you better men, the best men you can become? If you were to take what Christianity proffers you in this frequent fronting of your life with that of Jesus Christ, do you not believe you would be better men? And is there any other duty of life which at all compares with that of continually being and becoming "a better man"?

I have stated the case of current society against men in their relations to the higher life. It is for you to decide if there is ground for indictment. If you find that there is, I charge you to take such action as the gravity of the matter calls for.

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